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VOLUME 10

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VOLUME X

PANCHA
BY T. A. JANVIER

THE ABLEST MAN IN THE WORLD
BY E. P. MITCHELL

YOUNG MOLL'S PEEVY
BY C. A. STEPHENS

MANMAT'HA
BY CHARLES DE KAY

A DARING FICTION
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THE STORY OF TWO LIVES
BY JULIA SCHAYER

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PANCHA: A STORY OF MONTEREY.

By T. A. Janvier.

WHEN the Conde de Monterey, being then Viceroy of this gracious realm of New Spain, sent his viceregal commissioners, attended by holy priests, up into the northern country to choose a site for an outpost city, there was found no spot more beautiful, none more worthy to be crowned, than this where the city of Monterey stands to-day. And so the commissioners halted beside the noble spring, the *ojo de agua*, that gushes out from its tangle of white pebbles in what now is the very heart of the town; and the priests set up the sacred cross and sang a sweet song of praise and thankfulness to the good God who had so well guided them to where they would be; and the colonists entered in and possessed the land.

This all happened upon a fair day now close upon three hundred years gone by. From century

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to century the city has grown, yet always in accord with the lines established by its founders. The houses a-building now are as the houses built three hundred years ago; and, going yet farther into the past, as the houses which were built by the Moors when they came into the Gothic peninsula, bringing with them the life and customs of a land that even then was old. So it has come to pass that the traveler who sojourns here—having happily left behind him on the farther side of the Rio Grande the bustle and confusion and hurtful toil of this overpowering nineteenth century—very well can believe himself transported back to that blessed time and country in which the picturesque was ranked above the practical, and in which not the least of human virtues was the virtue of repose.

Very beautiful is the site of Monterey: its noble flanking mountains, the Silla and the Mitras, are east and west of it; its grand rampart, the Sierra Madre, sweeps majestically from flank to flank to the southward, and its outlying breastwork, a range of far-away blue peaks, is seen mistily off in the north. And the city is in keeping with its setting. The quaint, mysterious houses, inclosing sunny gardens and tree-planted court-yards; the great cathedral where, in the dusk of evening, at vespers, one may see each night new wonders, Rembrandt-like, beautiful, in light and shade; the church of St. Francis, and the old ruined church beside it—built, first of all, in honor of the saint who had guided the Viceroy's commissioners so

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well; the bowery *plaza*, with the great dolphin-fountain in its centre, and the *plazuelas*, also with fountains and tree-clad; the narrow streets; the old-time market-place, alive with groups of buyers and sellers fit to make glad a painter's heart—all these picturesque glories, together with many more, unite to make the perfect picturesqueness of Monterey.

Yet Pancha, who had been born in Monterey, and who never had been but a league away from it in the whole seventeen years of her life-time, did not know that the city in which she lived was picturesque at all. She did know, though, that she loved it very dearly. Quite the saddest time that she had ever passed through was the week that she had spent once at the Villa de Guadalupe—a league away to the eastward, at the Silla's foot—with her Aunt Antonia. It was not that *tia* Antonia was not good to her, nor that life at the Villa de Guadalupe—as well conducted a little town, be it said, with as quaint a little church, as you will find in the whole State of Nuevo Leon—was not pleasant in its way; but it was that she longed for her own home. And when, coming back at last to the city, perched on the forward portion of *tio* Tadeo's *burro*, she peeped over the *burro's* long ears—at the place where the road turns suddenly just before it dips to cross the valley—and caught sight once more of the dome of the cathedral, and the clock-tower of the market-house, and the old Bishop's palace on its hill in the far background, with the

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Mitras rising beyond, and a flame of red and gold above the Sierra left when the sun went down,—when Pancha's longing eyes rested once more on all these dear sights of home, she buried her little face in *tio* Tadeo's pudgy shoulder and fairly sobbed for joy.

Many a person, though, coming a stranger and with a stranger's prejudices into this gentle, lovely Mexican land, would have thought Pancha's love of home quite incomprehensible; for her home, the house in which she dwelt, was not lovely to eyes brought up with a rigorous faith in right angles and the monotonous regularity of American city walls. In point of fact, persons of this sort might have held—and, after their light, with some show of justice—that Pancha's home was not a house at all.

Crossing the city of Monterey from west to east is a little valley, the *arroyo* of Santa Lucia, into which, midway in its passage, comes through another *arroyo* of a few hundred yards in length the water from the *ojo de agua*—the great spring whereat the Conde's commissioners paused content, and beside which the holy fathers sang songs of praise. Along both banks of these two little valleys grow trees, and canebrakes, and banana groves, and all manner of bushes and most pleasant grass; and in among the bushes and trees, here and there, are little huts of wattled golden cane overlaid with a thatch of brown. And it was in one of these *jacals*, standing a stone's throw below the causeway that

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crosses the *arroyo* of the *ojo de agua*, upon the point of land that juts out between the two valleys before they become one, that Pancha was born, and where most contentedly she lived. Over the *jacal* towered a great pecan tree; and a banana grew graciously beside it, and back of it was a huddle of feathery, waving canes. Truly it was not a grand home, but Pancha loved it; nor would she have exchanged it even for one of the fine houses whose stone walls you could see above and beyond it, showing grayly through the green of the trees.

For nearly all the years of her little life the love of the beautiful city of Monterey, of her poor little home that yet was so dear to her, of the good father and mother who had cared for her so well since she came to them from the kind God who sends beautiful children into the world, for her little brother and sister, the twins Antonio and Antonia, who gave a world of trouble,—for they were sad pickles,—but who repaid her by a world of childish lovingness for her care: for nearly all her life long these loves had sufficed to fill and to satisfy Pancha's heart. But within a year now a new love, a love that was stronger and deeper than all of these put together, had come to her and had grown to be a part of her life. And Pancha knew, down in the depths of her heart, that this love had begun on the very first day that her eyes had rested upon Pepe's gallant figure and handsome face—the day when Pepe, having been made captain of a brave company of *contrabandistas*, had come up to Monte-

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rey to partake of the Holy Sacrament at Easter, and to be blessed by his old father, and to receive the congratulations of his friends.

Pancha's father, Christóbal, a worthy *cargador* who never in the whole twenty years that he had discharged the responsible duties of his calling had lost or injured a single article confided to his care, and old Manuel, who held the honorable position of *sereno*—a member of the night-watch—in the city of Monterey, had known each other from a time long before Pancha was born; and from a full understanding of each other's good qualities, and from certain affinities and common tastes, the two old fellows had come in the course of years to be the closest friends. Cristóbal the *cargador*—better known, being a little bandy-legged man, as Tobalito—was scarcely less delighted than was Manuel himself when Pepe—a motherless lad who had grown to manhood in the care of a good aunt—came up from his home in Tamaulipas that Eastertide to tell of his good fortune. The boy was a gallant boy, they both agreed,—as they drank his health more times than was quite good for them in Paras brandy of the best, on which never a *tlaco* of duty had been paid,—and before him had opened now a magnificent future. Being a captain of *contrabandistas* at twenty-two, what might he not be at thirty? His fortune was assured! And old Catalina shared in this joy of her husband's and of her husband's friend, and drank also, relishingly, a little mug of brandy to Pepe's good fortune—present

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and to come. Even the twins, Antonio and Antonia, entered into the spirit of the festive occasion, and manifested their appreciation of it by refraining from signal mischief for the space of a whole hour: at the end of which period Pancha, perceiving that they were engaged in imitating the process of washing clothes in the stream, and judging rightly that the earnestness of their operations boded no good, was just in time to rescue the yellow cat from a watery grave.

And it was on this happy day, as Pancha knew afterward, that her love for Pepe first began.

This was a year past, now; and for many months Pancha had been gladdened by the knowledge that her love was returned—though, as yet, this sweet certainty had not come to her in words. Indeed, during the past twelvemonth Pepe had been but little in Monterey. As became a young captain of *contrabandistas* who longed to prove that he deserved to wear his spurs, his time had been passed for the most part in making handsome dashes from the Zona Libre into the interior. Already the fame of his brilliant exploits was great along the frontier; already to the luckless officers of the *contraresguardo* his name was a mocking and a reproach. What with his knowledge of the mountain paths and hiding-places, his boldness and his prudence, his information—coming it might be treason to say from where, but always exact and trustworthy—of where the revenue people would be at any hour of any day or night, the *contraresguardo* seemed to have no

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more chance of catching him than they had of catching the wind of heaven or the moon itself.

Once, indeed, Pepe had a narrow escape. At the outskirts of Lampazos word came to him that the customs guard was at his very heels. There was no hiding-place near; to run for it with a train of heavily laden *burros* was of no earthly use at all; to run for it without the *burros* would have been a disgrace. And Pepe did not attempt to run. As fast as they could be driven he drove the *burros* into the town, and halted them in squads of three and four at friendly houses; spoke a word or two at each door, and then galloped off with his men into the outer wilderness of *chaparral*. And when, ten minutes later, the men of the *contraresguardo* came flourishing into Lampazos, certain of victory at last, not a vestige of the *contrabando* could they find! True, in the *patios* of a dozen houses were certain weary-looking *burros* whose backs were warm, and near them were pack-saddles which were warm also; but what had been upon those pack-saddles no man could surely say. The explanation vouchsafed that the lading had been firewood was not, all things considered, wholly satisfactory; but it could not be disproved. And as the possession of warm pack-saddles and warm-backed *burros* is not an indictable offense even in Mexico, the *contraresguardo* could do nothing better in the premises than swear with much heartiness and ride sullenly away. And to the honor of Lampazos be it said that when, in due course of time, Pepe re-

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turned and withdrew his *burro*-train from the town, not a single package of the *contrabando* had been stolen or lost!

So Pepe, by his genius and his good luck, proved his right to wear his spurs. And the merchants of the interior held him in high esteem; and people generally looked upon him as a rising young man; and Pancha, who read aright the story told by his bold yet tender brown eyes, suffered herself to love this gallant captain of *contrabandistas* with all her heart.

Yet while this was the first time that Pancha had loved, it was not the first time that love had been given her. A dozen young fellows, as everybody knew, and as even she, though quite to herself, demurely acknowledged, were in love with her to their very ears. One or two of them had gone so far, indeed, as to open communications, through proper representatives, for the rare favor of her hand. The most earnest, though the least demonstrative of these, was a certain captain in the *contraresguardo*, by name Pedro; a good fellow in his way, but quite shut out beyond the pale of reputable society, of course, by his unfortunate calling.

Naturally Pancha never was likely to think very seriously of loving Pedro; yet pity for him, acting on her gentle heart, had made her in some sort his friend. It was not altogether his fault that he was an officer of the *contraresguardo*, and other people besides Pancha believed that but for this blight upon him a good career might have been his. But

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luck had been against Pedro from the very day of his birth; for when he was born his mother died, and a little later his father died also. Being thus left lonely in the world, he fell into the keeping of his uncle, Padre Juan, a grim priest who, having lost all happiness in life himself, saw little reason why he should seek to make the lives of others glad. Dismally the boy grew up in this narrow, cheerless home. The Padre fain would have made of him a priest also; but against this fate Pedro rebelled, and accepted, while yet a boy, the alternative means of livelihood that his uncle offered him in the service of the *contraresguardo*.

As his rebellion against his proposed induction into the priesthood showed, the boy had strong stuff in him. He had a mighty will of his own. And there was this in common between him and his grim uncle: a stern resolve, when duty was clear, to do duty and nothing else. Therefore it came to pass that Pedro, being entered into the hateful service of the customs preventive force, presently was recognized by his superiors as one of the very few men of the corps who, in all ways, were trustworthy; and as trustworthiness is the rarest of virtues in the *contraresguardo*,—a service so hated that usually only men of poor spirit will enter it at all,—his constant loyalty brought him quick promotion as its just reward. Yet Pedro had no happiness in his advancement. Each step upward, as he very well knew, was earned at the cost of greater hatred and contempt. Those who would

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have been his friends, had the lines of his life fallen differently, were his enemies. Nowhere could he hope to find kindliness and love. Therefore he grew yet more stern and silent, and yet more earnestly gave himself to the full discharge of the duty that was sacred to him because it was his duty, but that in his heart he abhorred. Nor did he ever waver in his faithfulness until, coming to know Pancha, his chilled heart was warmed by her sweet looks of friendliness, the first that ever he had known; and, as fate decreed, the force of duty found arrayed against it the force of love.

Pancha had a tender, gentle nature, in which was great kindliness; and before she knew Pepe there was some little chance, perhaps, that in sheer pity of his forlornness she might have given Pedro her love. This, of course, showed how weak and how thoughtless Pancha was; how ignorant of the feelings of society; how careless of the good opinion of the world. To be sure, the possibility of her loving Pedro never passed beyond a possibility; but that it went so far counted for a great deal to him, to whom, in all his life, no single gleam nor even faintest hope of love had ever come. The gentle glance or two which she had cast him in her compassionate sorrow for his friendlessness sank down into the depths of Pedro's heart, and bred there for her that great love—tender, yet almost stern in its fierce intensity—to which only a passionate, repressed nature can give birth. And through the year that passed after Pepe had gained

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his captaincy, and at the same time Pancha's favor, Pedro's love had grown yet stronger and deeper,—growing the more, perhaps, because it was so hopeless and so deeply hid; but Pancha, whose very life was wrapped in Pepe's now, had almost ceased to remember that such a person as this rueful captain of the *contraresguardo* lived.

Still another life-thread was interwoven with the life-threads of these three. Dearest of Pancha's girl-friends was Chona,—for so was shortened and softened her stately name, Ascencion,—daughter of a *leñador* whose *jacal* was near by, and with whom her father had long been on friendly terms.

A grand creature was this Chona, daughter of the *leñador*. The simple folk among whom she lived called her "La Reina," and her majestic beauty made her look indeed a queen. Yet was she not loved by those among whom she lived. Her nature was as imperious as her beauty was imperial, and, save only Pancha, there was none who called her friend. Because of their very unlikeness, these two were drawn together. Pancha had for Chona an enthusiastic devotion; and Chona graciously accepted the homage rendered as her queenly right. In the past year, though, since Pepe's triumphal visit to Monterey, a change had come over Chona that was beyond the understanding of Pancha's simple, loving heart. She no longer responded—even in the fitful fashion that had been her wont—to Pancha's lovingness. She was moody; at times she was even harsh. More

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than once Pancha, chancing to turn upon her suddenly, had surprised in her eyes a look that seemed born of hate itself. This change was grievous and strange to Pancha; but it troubled her less than it would have done a year before. For now her whole heart was bright with gladness in her love of Pepe, and with the glad hope that his love was given her in return.

So, for Pancha at least, the time passed blithely on. Her mood of compassion for Pedro was forgotten, and her loss of Chona's friendship—if ever she had possessed it—caused her no great sorrow; and all because her love for Pepe filled to overflowing her loving heart.

THIS was the way that matters stood the next Easter, when Pepe again came up to Monterey to take part in the blessed services of the church, to see again his old father, and again to receive graciously the congratulations of his friends.

And this time Pepe told his love to Pancha in words. In the warm twilight of the spring evening —being followed, as custom in Mexico prescribes, by the discreet *tia* Antonia, also come into Monterey for the Easter festival—they walked slowly among the bushes and trees lining the bank of the *ojo de agua*, passed beneath the arch of the causeway, and stood beside the broad, clear pool where the water of the great spring pauses a little before it flows outward to the stream. It was on this very spot, say the legends of the town, that the good

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Franciscan fathers, three hundred years ago, set up the holy cross and sang their song of thankfulness and praise.

And here it was—while the discreet *tia* Antonia manifested her discretion by standing where she could watch closely, yet could not hear—that to Pancha were whispered the sweetest words that ever she had heard, that ever she was to hear. In her memory dwelt for a little while joyously the picture of the dark water at her feet that, a little beyond, grew duskily green with aquatic plants; the massive stone causeway that cast a shadow upon them in the waning light reflected from the red sky beyond the Mitras crest; the trees beside the spring swaying a little in the gentle evening wind; the hush over all of the departing day. Very dear to Pancha was the memory of this picture—until, in the same setting, came another picture, ghastly, terrible, that made the place more horrible to her than the crazing horror of a dream. But the future was closed to her, happily, and in her heart that Easter evening was only a perfect happiness and a perfect love.

Later, when they went back to the *jacal* of wattled cane, there was great rejoicing among the older folk that Pepe's suit had sped so well. It was not, of course, a surprise to anybody, this suit of his. In point of fact, it all had been duly settled beforehand between the two old men,—as a well-conducted love affair in Mexico properly must be,—and this dramatic climax to it was a mere nom-

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inal concession to Pepe's foreign tastes, acquired through much association with *Americanos* upon the frontier. So, the result being satisfactory, the Paras brandy was brought forth again, and toasts were drunk to Pepe's and Pancha's long happiness. And these were followed by toasts to the success—though that was assured in advance, of course—of a great venture in which Pepe was about to engage; a venture that infallibly was to make him a rich man.

The scheme that Pepe had devised was worthy of himself. Its basis was an arrangement—made who shall say how?—that all the forces of the *contraresguardo* and *rurales* should be sent on a wild-goose chase into the mountains, and sent far enough to make sure that they should stay in the mountains for a whole night and a whole day. And, the coast being thus cleared, it was the purpose of this daring captain of *contrabandistas* to come up from the Zona Libre with not one, but with three great trains of *burros* laden with *contrabando*, and to bring these trains, in sections and under cover of darkness, actually into the city of Monterey! Further, to make quite sure that in the city he should meet with no hindrance to the execution of his plans, he had arranged that at the hour his trains were to enter from the east, a *jacal* should be set on fire over in the western suburb. Fires occur but rarely in Monterey, and when one does occur all the town flocks to see it: it is better than a *fiesta*. It was a stroke of genius on Pepe's part to

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think of this diversion; and the man who owned the doomed *jacal*—one of Pepe's band who himself had a share in the venture—was eager to put so brilliant a plan into execution. Indeed, to insure success a dozen *jacals* might have been profitably consumed, for the *contrabande* was to be exceptionally rich in quality as well as great in quantity, and the profit upon it would be something that to such simple-minded folk as Manuel and Tobalito and Catalina seemed almost fabulous.

The very risk of the venture, as Pepe pointed out, constituted its safety. In the mountains there was a chance at any time of a fight, but in the city streets there was literally nobody to fear—"unless the *serenos* should turn *contraresguardo!*" he suggested; whereat there was much cheerful laughter, that of the honest *sereno* Manuel being loudest of all.

The *leñador*, Tobalito's trusted friend, hearing the sounds of festivity and snuffing the Paras brandy from afar off, came in to join them; and being informed of the happy issue of Pepe's love affair, and of Pepe's noble project, he gladly joined in drinking the double toast and in adding his good wishes to theirs. So they made merry over their hopeful prospects; and even when the twins, Antonio and Antonia, succeeded in an unwatched moment in possessing themselves of the precious bottle of Paras brandy, and thereafter, to their great joy, emptied a considerable portion of it over the unfortunate yellow cat, a mere desultory

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spanking was deemed to be a meet atonement for the act.

So Pepe rode lightly out from Monterey, and behind him rode not black care, but brightest joy, and after him went good wishes and great love. When he came again he would be rich, and—dearer than all other riches — Pancha would be his. Truly, a young fellow of three and twenty, who had carved his own way to so brave a fortune, might well rejoice within himself; and Pepe did rejoice with all his heart. As he rode down the valley—the valley that is scarred by the railroad now—his thoughts ran back pleasantly over the past few years of hard work in his profession; over his many successes tarnished by not a single serious failure; and still more pleasantly his thoughts ran forward into the future, when all his toil was to receive, over and above a liberal compensation, a most sweet reward. One more deal in the game that he knew so well how to play, and all the stakes would be his. No wonder that Pepe's heart was glad within him; that his soul was filled with joy.

Yet Pancha, left behind in Monterey to wait while Pepe worked, was sorrowful. As sometimes happens to us when we are confronted by the certainty of great happiness, she was possessed by a gloomy sadness that came of dark forebodings in her mind. The very greatness and sureness of this happiness awed her into doubt. She knew that to take her good fortune in this faint-hearted way

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was not wise in itself, and was not what Pepe would approve; and that she might please Pepe she berated herself roundly and tried to laugh away her fears—though they scarcely amounted to fears, being but shadowy doubts and unshaped thoughts in which always was a tinge of nameless dread. But scolding herself and laughing at herself were equally unavailing; therefore she betook herself to that refuge which is dear to women the world over, but which especially is dear to women in Roman Catholic lands—the refuge of prayer.

A placid, holy place is the church of San Francisco in Monterey. It stands upon a quiet street, the Calle de San Francisco, where little travel or noise of traffic ever comes, and about it always is an atmosphere of sacred rest. On one side of it is the ruin of the old, old church where, near three hundred years ago, the colonists sent northward by the Conde de Monterey first met within church walls to offer up to God their sacrifice of praise and prayer for the grace shown to them in bringing them within so fair a land. On the other side is the old convent, where long the good Franciscans dwelt, and whence they went forth to save poor heathen souls. The convent is deserted now, but holy memories live on in it, and sanctify its silent, sunny cloister and its still, shady cells. And close beside the convent grows a single stately palm, larger and more beautiful than any other palm in all the country round. The old church is shadowy within, and a faint smell of incense hangs

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always in the dusky air. The floor is laid in panels of heavy wood, worn smooth by the knees of the five generations which have worshiped there, and beneath each panel is a grave. Reverently do the Mexicans believe that thrice blessed is the rest in death of him who sleeps within the earth made consecrate by bearing on its breast the house of God.

So it was to this old church, the church of her patron saint, whose name she bore, that Pancha came to pray that Pepe might prosper in his gallant adventure, and that the happiness in store for both of them might not be wrecked by evil chance. To pass from the heat and glare of the April sunshine into the cool, dark church was in itself a refreshment and a rest. Save an old woman or two, slowly and wearily moving from station to station and slowly and wearily at each station repeating her form of prayer, the church was deserted ; and in the quiet corner near the chancel rail where Pancha knelt, far away from the mumbling old women, there was a perfect quiet, a holy peace. Her prayer was a little simple prayer : only that the good Saint Francis would keep Pepe safe from all harm, and that the *contrabando* might not be captured, and that she and Pepe might be married as they had planned to be, and might live on in happiness together to a good old age. When she had made her prayer she knelt on for a long while, dreamily thinking of the Saint's goodness and of his mighty power to guard and save. And, as she

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knelt there, gradually faith and hope came back again into her heart, and the conviction grew strong within her that the blessed saint had heard her prayer and had sent to her this comforting for assurance that it should be granted to the full. So at last, heartened and quieted, she came out once more into the April sunshine. Yet, even as she left the church there passed before the sun a cloud. Pancha, whose mind was full of happy thoughts, did not perceive this cloud.

THAT day in Monterey one other heart was troubled, but to it came not peace nor rest. Much to her surprise, Pancha—standing near the causeway over which Pepe gallantly had ridden forth upon his brave adventure, her heart full of love and hope and fear—had felt an arm about her neck, and turning had found Chona by her side. In her tender mood this mark of affection from the friend whom she had deemed lost had moved her greatly, and with little urging she told to Chona the sweet happiness that at last certainly was hers; and wondered to see the look of hate—there could be no mistaking it now—that came flashing into Chona's eyes.

"And he loves a pitiful thing like *you!* Loves *you*, when he might—go! you are no friend of mine!"

In Chona's voice there was a ring of bitter contempt that lost itself, with the abrupt change, in yet more bitter rage. With an angry push that

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almost threw Pancha into the water, she turned, sprang up the bank, and disappeared among the trees. So was Pancha made yet more sorrowful, and yet more gladly turned to the holy church for rest and comfort in prayer.

For Chona there was no comfort. Her brain was in a whirl, and in her heart was only wretchedness. The fate had come to her that for months past she had known must be hers; yet now that it actually had overtaken her, she resented it as though it were a sudden and unexpected blow. Against hope she had hoped to win Pepe's love—and now all hope was dead, and she knew that her chance of having him for her very own was lost forever. Still worse was it that the love which she longed for so hungrily should go to another. This was more than she could bear. Pepe's death, she felt, would have caused her a pain far less poignant—for she herself easily could have died, too. But Pepe lost to her arms, and won to the arms of such a poor, spiritless creature as this Pancha, was an insult that made greater the injury done her a thousand-fold. Her fierce love was turned in a moment to fiercer hate; and from hate is but a single step to revenge.

That night, when the *leñador* came home,—and in good spirits, for he had sold his wood well,—he told Chona gleefully of the grand project that Pepe had on foot; of the clever scheme by which the customs people were to be tricked; of the fine fortune that surely was coming to the captain of

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contrabandistas now as a fitting culmination of his gallant career.

After her father, with a prodigious yawn, had ended his narration and had betaken himself to sleep, for a long while Chona sat there in the open space before the *jacal* alone with her own thoughts. In the darkness and stillness—for only the low, soft rippling of the water broke in upon the peacefulness of night—the longing for revenge that possessed her slowly took form in her mind. The hours passed swiftly as she brooded upon her wrong and upon the means that she had chosen to compass vengeance. When at last she arose and went into the *jacal*, the morning star shone bright above the twin peaks of the Silla, and the whole mountain stood out sharply, a huge black mass, against the clear, pale light of the eastern sky.

Yet the morning still was young when Chona—her father meanwhile having started with the *burro* for the mountains—went down to the barracks of the *contraresguardo* and asked of the sentinel on duty permission to see the *capitan*, Pedro. The sentinel smiled as he dispatched a messenger with her request, and thought what a lucky fellow the *capitan* Pedro was, to be sure.

"Come to me quickly in the Alameda," said Chona, when Pedro had joined her. "I can tell you of a great plan that the smugglers have on foot—and also of a matter very near to your own heart." Without waiting for an answer, she turned sharply and walked rapidly away.

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Perceiving that she was much excited, Pedro did not doubt that Chona had information of importance to give him; and his experience had taught him that the treachery of a jealous woman was not a thing that the customs preventive service could afford to despise. To the personal part of her address he did not give a second thought. Without returning to the barracks, he set off at once for the Alameda. The sentinel, lazily watching the two retreating figures, smiled again, and said to himself, "Aha! my little captain is a lucky man to-day!"

It is a good mile from the barracks to the Alameda. Chona covered the distance rapidly. As she entered the ragged pleasure-ground, she turned to make sure that Pedro was following her, and then crossed it quickly and disappeared through a gap in a hedge beyond. When Pedro passed through the gap he found her seated on the ground between the bushy screen and the cane-field that it inclosed. They were remote from all houses, from all curious ears; for the Alameda, being but a forlorn place, has few visitors.

She motioned him to a seat beside her, and said, hurriedly:

"The *capitan* Pepe will bring three great trains of *contrabando* on Friday night into Monterey."

"Yes. He is your lover?"

She flashed her glittering black eyes on him savagely. "It is no affair of yours who my lover may be. But I will tell you this: Pepe is the lover of Tobalito's Pancha—the girl whom you love."

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She marked with satisfaction how he winced under her words, the gleam of anger that came into his eyes. But, without giving him time to speak, she went on rapidly to tell of Pepe's plan, and with a clearness and precision that left no room for doubting that she told the truth. Her excitement increased as she spoke. Her black eyes grew blacker as the pupils dilated; her breath came short as her bosom rose and fell tremblingly; twice or thrice she pressed her hand upon her heart. As she ended she sprang to her feet and held erect her superb form. Her eyes gleamed with the anger of hate, her hands were clinched, her guardedly low voice quivered with a passionate energy.

"I have betrayed him into your hands, even as he has betrayed my offered love. Take him! Kill him! He has only my hate. And remember, it is he who has won from you Pancha's love. He must die!" In an instant she had plunged into the thicket of canes. For a few moments the rustling of the leaves sounded hissingly as she fleetly pushed her way between them; the sound grew fainter; presently it faded out of hearing, and all was still.

Pedro stood for awhile motionless, vacantly staring at the place in the cane-thicket, still marked by the swaying leaves, where she had disappeared. Then slowly he passed through the gap in the hedge, and slowly walked across the Alameda. When he came to the circle of stone benches he sat down wearily. He did not in the least particular

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doubt the truth of what Chona had told him; and because he knew so surely that it was all true a great sorrow weighed upon him, a cruel conflict arose in his heart. Chona had told him too much. Had she told him only of Pepe's plans, her purpose would have been easily gained; for in a strictly professional and matter-of-course way he would have crushed the smugglers' scheme effectually, and probably the smugglers with it. Chona, judging his nature by her own, had overshot her mark. The very fact that Pepe was Pancha's lover, that his ruin would be her misery, that his death might also be her death, made Pedro—for the first and last time in his life—regard his duty falteringly. For his love for Pancha was so loyal, so utterly unselfish, that even this very love he was ready to sacrifice for her; ready, for her happiness' sake, to yield her to another's arms. The question that now confronted him was whether or not he could sacrifice for Pancha his honor.

What made this cruel strait in which Pedro found himself crueler still was the certainty that should he save his honor no one at all (yet it was only Pancha of whom he thought) would believe that in capturing Pepe he had been prompted by any higher motive than revenge. Should Pepe be harmed, Pancha would hate him; should Pepe be killed,—and the chances favored this issue, for Pepe was a man who far rather would die than surrender,—Pancha would turn from him in horror, as a loathsome creature too base even to die.

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These thoughts went whirlingly through Pedro's mind, and there came to him no safe issue from his perplexity. Toward whichever of the two paths before him he turned, he saw standing a figure with a drawn sword: Love barred the way of Honor; Honor barred the way of Love.

At last, the conflict still continuing in his breast, he slowly arose from his seat on the stone bench, and slowly walked back into the town; but he took the streets by the hospital and the market-place, thus leaving the *arroyo* of the *ojo de agua* far out of his path. As he entered the barracks the sentinel looked at him curiously. "Oho! there has been a quarrel," he thought. "To quarrel with 'La Reina,' my little captain must be a very great fool!"

The noise and confusion, the loud talking and coarse laughter of the barracks jarred on Pedro, and presently he went out again. Walking without purpose, he retraced unconsciously his steps toward the Alameda. Then, finding of a sudden an object, he walked on rapidly until the shady lanes beyond the Alameda were traversed and he stood at the gate of the Campo Santo. Reverently he entered between the stone pillars of the gateway and stood in the presence of the holy dead.

In a shady corner of the old grave-yard he seated himself upon a stone that had fallen from the wall, and took up again resolutely the problem that he had to solve. There in the perfect peace and stillness, with only the dead about him for witnesses,

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the great battle of his life was fought and won. His own faith in his manhood came back to him and gave him strength; the doubt and trouble were cast out of his soul; a steadfast light shone clearly upon the way that he must go. And the silent counselors around him confirmed his choice. By the very utterness of their silence, as it seemed to him, they were as strong voices declaring that Love is but the dying daughter of Time, while Honor is the deathless son of Eternity.

When he stood up, the fight ended, he was very pale, and sweat stood in great drops upon his forehead; but in every line of his figure was firmness. Erect and steadily—with something of the feeling, as he bethought him, that had upheld him once when leading his men upon a most desperate charge—he marched between the graves and out again through the gate-way. His resolute step was in keeping with his resolute purpose. Love lowered her sword and fell back, conquered. The path of Honor was clear.

Being cheered by her prayer and by the good saint's promise that it should be granted, Pancha went home blithely and with a heart at rest. And further cheer came to her from her mother, the excellent Catalina. By profession, this good Catalina was a *lavandera*. Hers was a vicarious virtue, for while her washing was endless, its visible results rarely had any perceptible connection with herself. Indeed, it is a fact that the washer-women

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of Mexico are upheld by so lofty a sense of their duty to their employers that only by the operation of some extraordinary law of chance is it that their own garments ever get washed at all.

Down by the edge of the clear stream, in company with many other washer-women, Catalina practised her honorable vocation, squatted upon the ground and having in front of her a broad, flat stone. On this stone she soaped and rubbed and squeezed each separate garment until her fine knowledge of her art told her that cleanliness had been achieved, and that for the perfecting of her work was needed only copious rinsing in the running stream. Close beside her, always, was a little fire, whereon rested a little boiler; and thence smoke and steam curled up together amidst the branches of the overhanging trees. On the low bushes near by were spread the drying clothes; in the middle distance stood out the straw-thatched hut; and beyond, for background, were trees and bushes and huts and half-hidden stone walls. And as near her as their perverse spirits would permit them to come were the twins, Antonio and Antonia, scantily clad or not clad at all, usually engaged in some small evil, or else basking like two little brown lizards in the sun. Some day an artist will come to Monterey who will paint Catalina at her work with all her picturesque surroundings; and if he paints the picture well, he will thereafter awake to find himself famous.

Pancha, joining this group, and perfecting it by

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standing erect beside the bubbling boiler, was further cheered by Catalina's confident talk concerning the certainty of Pepe's success. Manuel had stopped at the *jacal* on his way homeward—coming sleepily back from his vigilant duties on the city watch—to leave the good news that a detachment of the *contraresguardo* really had been sent away early that morning toward Garcia—quite in the opposite direction from that whence Pepe would come. There could be no doubt about this assuring fact, for one of his fellow *serenos*, being on duty near the barracks, actually had seen the force depart. So it was clear that the most important part of the promise made to Pepe by his employers had been fulfilled. The other part, the massing of the *rurales* in the wrong place at the critical moment, might now confidently be counted upon—and this made sure that Pepe would accomplish safely his unostentatious yet triumphal entry into Monterey. As became the prospective mother-in-law of the hero of this noble adventure, Catalina greatly rejoiced; and Pancha, listening to such heartening news, was still more firmly convinced that the good Saint Francis had heard her prayer.

But even while these comforting thoughts upheld the hopes of the watchers in Monterey, Chona's treachery was doing its work. In the early morning of the third day after Pepe's departure there had been a tough fight south of Lampazos—and the end of it was the capture by the

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contraresguardo of one of Pepe's three trains. Broken by a sudden charge, the guard of smugglers was overcome; one or two were killed, half a dozen were captured, and the rest saved themselves by the speed of their horses and their knowledge of the mountain paths. The men of the *contraresguardo* were jubilant. But there was no joy in the heart of their captain. He had but the cold satisfaction of knowing that he had done his duty —and bitter he had found that duty to do.

When the scattered *burros* had been driven together, and their packs made fast again, the convoy set off southward; for the capture had been made in the State of Nuevo Leon, and the *contrabando* would be turned into the custom-house at Monterey. Under the hot sun the train moved slowly along the valley; so slowly that Pedro's horse, outwalking the short-stepping *burros*, carried him far in advance of his command. He was too deeply buried in his own thoughts to perceive his loneliness, and it was only when he reached the town of Salinas that he roused himself and found that his convoy was almost out of sight down the dusty, winding road. On the bluff above the Salinas River he tethered his horse to a tree, and sat down in the shade of the ferry-man's hut to wait for his men to overtake him. The *barquero* speedily slunk away; but Pedro, heavy with his own heavy thoughts, took slight notice of his movements, save that he was glad to be left alone.

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A quarter of a mile from where he sat the road dipped into a recess behind a shoulder of the mountain, and for a little space was lost to view. He watched the train until it entered this recess, and then, while waiting for it to reappear, he bowed his head upon his hand. His heart was very full of bitterness. There was but little comfort for him in the fact that the train that he had captured had not been commanded by Pepe in person; for he knew that the precautions taken made the capture, either in the mountains or in Monterey, of the other two trains certain; and not less certain was the capture or the killing of Pepe himself. Certainly Pepe's fortune, probably his life, already was as good as forfeited; and with this forfeiture Pancha's hope of happiness was gone! And the cruel part of it all was that Pancha ever must believe that he, willfully, revengefully, because she had kept back from him her love, had brought upon her this great misery. In the darkness that beset him he saw no way of hopeful light. He had saved his honor, but he had wrecked his heart.

A rattle of rifle-shots snapped short his dismal revery. As he sprang to his feet he saw a squad of his own people, a dozen or so, galloping up the road, and a moment later four times as many men came out from behind the shoulder of the mountain in sharp pursuit. The pursued were bent low over the necks of their horses; from the crowd of pursuers there came each instant a puff of smoke

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followed by the sharp crack of the report; and each instant a horse fell, or ran wildly with empty saddle, as the balls went home.

Pedro loosened his revolver in his belt and sprang to his horse. The *barquero* had become visible again, and was standing beside him; on his face was a malicious, yet not wholly unkindly grin. "Quick!" he said. "Get into the boat. You yet have time." As an officer of the *contraresguardo* he hated Pedro cordially; but he had no especial wish to see him shot down, now that the smugglers had recaptured the *contrabando* and the fight was won. But Pedro already was mounted, and his horse was headed not toward the river, but toward his men. The *barquero* saw his purpose, and seized his bridle with a strong hand.

"God! Señor Captain, would you ride straight to your death?"

"Let loose, or I shoot!"

Like a flash Pedro's revolver was drawn and cocked and within an inch of the *barquero's* head.

"You are a fool, a madman! Go!" And the man straggered aside as the horse, bounding forward, sharp stricken with the spurs, brushed against him, and nearly threw him to the ground.

"*Es mi deber!*" "'Tis my duty!" came ringing back through the rush of air as Pedro rode furiously onward; and it seemed to the *barquero*—yet this was so strange a thing that he could not trust his ears—that there was gladness, nay, even triumph, in Pedro's tone.

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Whether spoken in sorrow or in hope, certain it is that these were the last words which the *capitan* Pedro spoke on earth.

In Monterey there was no knowledge of the loss and of the gaining back again from the *contrares-guardo* of a part of Pepe's treasure; no knowledge that treachery had come in to defeat Pepe's well-laid plans. Therefore when at last the momentous day arrived, there was with Pepe's friends a glad expectancy and happy hope. Under all, of course, was somewhat of fear that even in the moment of its success failure might come and dash the gallant plan. And because of such dismal doubt, Tobalito's face at times was bereft of its accustomed cheeriness, and for minutes together he would sit silent, the while mechanically polishing the brass number that, as a *cargador*, he wore upon his breast, as was his wont on the rare occasions when his mind was beset by troublous thoughts. But these fears, in which, also, the others shared, had no endurance; for all had steady faith in the all-powerfulness of Pepe's lucky star. So, slowly, the day wore on, and at last was lost in night.

Excepting the twins, Antonio and Antonia, no one that night slept in the *jacal*. Tobalito sat before his door and smoked incessantly his corn-husk *cigarritos*. Beside him, smoking not less vigorously, sat Catalina. A little apart from these was Pancha, holding in her arms the yellow cat. And

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each of these three minds was so busy with its own thoughts that all of the three tongues were still. Only the yellow cat, having but little mind, and that being soothed into a calm content by Pancha's gentle strokings of her sleek fur, expressed her perfect happiness, and so made talk for the whole party, in a rumbling purr.

From where they sat—although they could not hope to see even the reflected light of the burning *jacal* that was to clear the way for the entry of the *contrabando*—they could see, a hundred yards away, the stone causeway standing out in the light of the young moon against the darkness beyond. Pancha's mind was full of sweet remembrance of the words which Pepe had spoken to her over beyond the causeway, beside the pool, but five little days before, and of the glad future that was bound up in the fulfilment of his hopes. Tobalito and Catalina, being somewhat beyond the age of romance, were thinking not less gladly of the good fortune that was in store for them through the rich son-in-law who had come to lighten the burdens of their old age. No more would the *cargador* bear heavy ladings of other people's goods; no more would the *lavandera* wear her life out in washing other people's clothes. And so all three waited and watched eagerly, straining their ears for the rattle of horses' feet upon the stone-paved streets; straining their eyes to catch the first glimpse of the *burro*-train stealing in from the Zona Libre with its rich load. For close beside them, across the causeway, the train

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that Pepe himself headed was to pass. Now and again they caught sight of a little point of flame passing and repassing near the farther end of the causeway; and they knew that it was the lantern of the *sereno*, and that Manuel also watched and waited hopefully to see his son, bearing his rich sheaves with him, come gallantly home. All four of these fond hearts were brimming full of love and hope and joy.

SLOWLY the young moon set, when suddenly Pancha was aroused by a strange confusion: pistol-shots —screams—a rush of horses' feet—oaths—the clash of steel—and on the causeway, dimly seen in the faint light, a confused mass of men and horses and laden *burros* were hurrying away before an orderly mass of horsemen riding in upon them from the east. And, before the full meaning of all this was clear to Pancha's mind, came another rush of horsemen charging down along the causeway from the west. Right under Pancha's eyes Pepe, surrounded by his foes, was fighting for his life; and Pancha knew that the fight was hopeless, and that Pepe's life was lost! Up at the end of the causeway she saw quivering for an instant the light of the *sereno's* lantern; and a vast sorrow for the old man standing there, full of years, yet henceforth to be childless, for the moment overcame the bitter agony in her own heart. But only for a moment. Then, with a cry keen and woful, that echoed along the *arroyo*, and even for an instant made the

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men pause in their deadly fight, with every drop of her sluggish but fierce Indian blood aroused and burning in her veins, she sprang to her feet, and but for Tobalito's strong, restraining grasp, she would have gone to Pepe's aid and died wildly striking by Pepe's side—as the Aztec women, her brave ancestors, fought and died on the causeways of Anahuac when the cruel Spaniards first came into the land. But Tobalito held her fast—and then a merciful unconsciousness came to give her breaking heart relief.

When life came back to Pancha, she was alone in the *jacal*, save that in one corner lay the twins, Antonio and Antonia, still asleep; and beside them, having fled thither for refuge during the noise and confusion of the fight, was huddled the yellow cat. Within the *jacal* a little candle feebly burned, casting a faint gleam of light through the open doorway out upon the broad, smooth leaves of the banana-tree. There was no sound to break the serene stillness of the night, and, for a little, Pancha half fancied, and tried hard to make herself believe, that she was but awaking from a woful dream. But the searching agony that wrenched her heart was too bitterly real to give a chance for this fond fancy to have play. And then, slowly but strongly, the thought came into her mind that she must go to Pepe; that, if living, she must bear to him words of comfort and of hope; that, if dead, she must cast one last loving look upon his face.

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So she passed out into the darkness—for only a faint, hazy light beyond the Mitras showed where the young moon had sunk away behind the mountains—and walked along the path that she and Pepe had trod together but five days before. This time she did not pass beneath the arch of the causeway. Where the path forked she turned to the right and climbed the bank of the *arroyo* and so came out upon the causeway itself. In the darkness she tripped and nearly fell, and, looking closely, she saw at her feet the body of a man. Resolutely, yet shudderingly, she stooped still closer to see by the faint starlight the dead face, and knew it for the face of one of Pepe's companions. Beside the dead *contrabandista* lay another dead body, clad in the uniform of the *contraresguardo;* and the two lay facing each other as they had fallen in the fight. Beyond were yet others, and a dead horse or two, and a dead *burro* —from which the lading of precious stuffs had been hastily removed—and carbines, and swords and pistols were lying as they fell from dead hands; for, in the joy of their victory and capture, the *contraresguardo* had wasted no time in bearing away their fallen comrades or in clearing off the field. And Pancha, wofully seeking for Pepe, passed back and forth among the dead.

While she searched thus, she saw slowly coming from the far end of the causeway a little point of light, and presently the old *sereno* wrapped in his long cloak, stood beside her. In a broken sentence

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or two he told her that, with Tobalito and Catalina, he had followed the *contraresguardo* to the barracks, and that Pepe was not among the prisoners, and so he had come back to look for him here. Pancha made him no answer in words, but she took his hand and kissed it; and, still holding it, they searched together for the dead one who had been all in all to them in the world. Along the whole length of the causeway they searched, but found him not.

"Yet he is here," said Manuel. "My boy is not a prisoner, and if not a prisoner, he surely was struck down in the fight."

And Pancha knew that Manuel spoke truth: Pepe could not be safe and free from harm while his men were captured or slain.

While they paused midway upon the causeway, standing upon the arch that spans the stream, a low, faint moan sounded through the still night air. The sound came up from the darkness below —from the space beside the pool. Bending together over the edge of the unguarded footway, Manuel held down his lantern so that its light fell into the depth beside the wall and was reflected back in broken rays from the rippling water. Then he moved the lantern slowly, until the light rested upon the bank and shone on Pepe's body stretched upon the ground—on Pepe's face upturned toward them piteously! And Pepe knew them. Up through the darkness came faintly the words, "Pancha! Padre!"

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When, going very quickly, they passed to the end of the causeway, and so down the bank of the *arroyo* to where he lay, he clasped feebly their hands as they knelt beside him: the lantern throwing a weird, uncertain light upon the three, upon the dark stone wall, upon the dark water of the pool.

"It was a trap, my father; we were betrayed," he said brokenly. "But we made a brave fight, and I can die without shame."

He felt the quiver that passed through Pancha's body as he spoke.

"Yes, I must die, my Pancha. It is very near. All is ended that we planned—that we planned on this very spot, not yet a little week ago. It is hard, my little one—but—it—must—be." Then he was silent, and clenched his teeth—this brave Pepe—that his face might not show to Pancha his mortal agony.

Manuel held Pepe's hand and wept: the silent, forlorn weeping of an utterly desolate old man. Pancha could not weep. She clutched Pepe's hand in both of hers, as though forcibly she would hold him back to life. Pepe understood her thought.

"It may not be, my Pancha, my Panchita. It is very, very near now. Give me one little kiss, my heart,"—it was almost in a whisper that Pepe spoke,—"one little kiss to tell me of your love before I go."

And so, for the first and the last time in her life, Pancha kissed Pepe upon the lips: a kiss in which

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was all the passionate love that would have been his in the long years to come; a kiss that was worth dying for, if only by dying it could be gained; a kiss that for a moment thrilled Pepe with the fullest, gladdest life that he had ever known—and that, being ended, left him dead.

Then Pancha, kneeling where the holy fathers, far back in the centuries, had sung their *Te Deum laudamus*, kneeling where but five little days before her life had been filled with a love so perfect as to be beyond all power of thankfulness in words of praise, looked down upon her dead lover and felt her heart break within her in the utterness of her despair.

STANDING amidst the dead upon the causeway above, a dim shadow against the star-lit sky, was another figure—unperceived by, yet completing, the group below. The arms were raised, half threateningly, half imploringly, and the lithe, vigorous form swayed in unison with the wild throbbings of a heart in which sated hate did mortal battle with outraged love. Chona had conquered; but even in the first flush of her triumph she knew that love and hope and happiness, that everything which makes life worth holding to, had been lost.

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THE ABLEST MAN IN THE WORLD.

By E. P. Mitchell.

IT may or may not be remembered that in 1878 General Ignatieff spent several weeks of July at the Badischer Hof in Baden. The public journals gave out that he visited the watering-place for the benefit of his health, said to be much broken by protracted anxiety and responsibility in the service of the Czar. But everybody knew that Ignatieff was just then out of favor at St. Petersburg, and that his absence from the centres of active statecraft at a time when the peace of Europe fluttered like a shuttlecock in the air, between Salisbury and Shouvaloff, was nothing more or less than politely disguised exile.

I am indebted for the following facts to my friend Fisher, of New York, who arrived at Baden on the day after Ignatieff, and was duly announced in the official list of strangers as "Herr Doctor

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Professor Fischer, mit Frau Gattin und Bed. Nordamerika."

The scarcity of titles among the travelling aristocracy of North America is a standing grievance with the ingenious person who compiles the official list. Professional pride and the instincts of hospitality alike impel him to supply the lack whenever he can. He distributes Governor, Major-General, and Doctor Professor with tolerable impartiality, according as the arriving Americans wear a distinguished, a martial, or a studious air. Fisher owed his title to his spectacles.

It was still early in the season. The theatre had not yet opened. The hotels were hardly half full, the concerts in the kiosk at the Conversationshaus were heard by scattering audiences, and the shopkeepers of the Bazaar had no better business than to spend their time in bewailing the degeneracy of Baden Baden since an end was put to the play. Few excursionists disturbed the meditations of the shrivelled old custodian of the tower on the Mercuriusberg. Fisher found the place very stupid —as stupid as Saratoga in June or Long Branch in September. He was impatient to get to Switzerland, but his wife had contracted a table d'hôte intimacy with a Polish countess, and she positively refused to take any step that would sever so advantageous a connection.

One afternoon Fisher was standing on one of the little bridges that span the gutterwide Oosbach, idly gazing into the water and wondering whether

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a good sized Rangely trout could swim the stream without personal inconvenience, when the porter of the Badischer Hof came to him on the run.

"Herr Doctor Professor!" cried the porter, touching his cap. "I pray you pardon, but the highborn the Baron Savitch out of Moscow, of the General Ignatieff's suite, suffers himself in a terrible fit, and appears to die."

In vain Fisher assured the porter that it was a mistake to consider him a medical expert; that he professed no science save that of draw poker; that if a false impression prevailed in the hotel it was through a blunder for which he was in no way responsible; and that, much as he regretted the unfortunate condition of the highborn the Baron out of Moscow, he did not feel that his presence in the chamber of sickness would be of the slightest benefit. It was impossible to eradicate the idea that possessed the porter's mind. Finding himself fairly dragged toward the hotel, Fisher at length concluded to make a virtue of necessity and to render his explanations to the Baron's friends.

The Russian's apartments were upon the second floor, not far from those occupied by Fisher. A French valet, almost beside himself with terror, came hurrying out of the room to meet the porter and the Doctor Professor. Fisher again attempted to explain, but to no purpose. The valet also had explanations to make, and the superior fluency of his French enabled him to monopolize the conversation. No, there was nobody there—nobody but

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himself, the faithful Auguste of the Baron. His Excellency, the General Ignatieff, his Highness, the Prince Koloff, Dr. Rapperschwyll, all the suite, all the world, had driven out that morning to Gernsbach. The Baron, meanwhile, had been seized by an effraying malady, and he, Auguste, was desolate with apprehension. He entreated Monsieur to lose no time in parley, but to hasten to the bedside of the Baron, who was already in the agonies of dissolution.

Fisher followed Auguste into the inner room. The Baron, in his boots, lay upon the bed, his body bent almost double by the unrelenting gripe of a distressful pain. His teeth were tightly clenched, and the rigid muscles around the mouth distorted the natural expression of his face. Every few seconds a prolonged groan escaped him. His fine eyes rolled piteously. Anon, he would press both hands upon his abdomen and shiver in every limb in the intensity of his suffering.

Fisher forgot his explanations. Had he been a Doctor Professor in fact, he could not have watched the symptoms of the Baron's malady with greater interest.

"Can Monsieur preserve him?" whispered the terrified Auguste.

"Perhaps," said Monsieur, dryly.

Fisher scribbled a note to his wife on the back of a card and dispatched it in the care of the hotel porter. That functionary returned with great promptness, bringing a black bottle and a glass

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The bottle had come in Fisher's trunk to Baden all the way from Liverpool, had crossed the sea to Liverpool from New York, and had journeyed to New York direct from Bourbon County, Kentucky. Fisher seized it eagerly but reverently, and held it up against the light. There were still three inches or three inches and a half in the bottom. He uttered a grunt of pleasure.

"There is some hope of saving the Baron," he remarked to Auguste.

Fully one-half of the precious liquid was poured into the glass and administered without delay to the groaning, writhing patient. In a few minutes Fisher had the satisfaction of seeing the Baron sit up in bed. The muscles around his mouth relaxed, and the agonized expression was superseded by a look of placid contentment.

Fisher now had an opportunity to observe the personal characteristics of the Russian Baron. He was a young man of about thirty-five, with exceedingly handsome and clear-cut features, but a peculiar head. The peculiarity of his head was that it seemed to be perfectly round on top—that is, its diameter from ear to ear appeared quite equal to its anterior and posterior diameter. The curious effect of this unusual conformation was rendered more striking by the absence of all hair. There was nothing on the Baron's head but a tightly fitting skull cap of black silk. A very deceptive wig hung upon one of the bed posts.

Being sufficiently recovered to recognize the

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presence of a stranger, Savitch made a courteous bow.

"How do you find yourself now?" inquired Fisher, in bad French.

"Very much better, thanks to Monsieur," replied the Baron, in excellent English, spoken in a charming voice. "Very much better, though I feel a certain dizziness here." And he pressed his hand to his forehead.

The valet withdrew at a sign from his master, and was followed by the porter. Fisher advanced to the bedside and took the Baron's wrist. Even his unpractised touch told him that the pulse was alarmingly high. He was much puzzled, and not a little uneasy at the turn which the affair had taken. "Have I got myself and the Russian into an infernal scrape?" he thought. "But no—he's well out of his teens, and half a tumbler of such whiskey as that ought not to go to a baby's head."

Nevertheless, the new symptoms developed themselves with a rapidity and poignancy that made Fisher feel uncommonly anxious. Savitch's face became as white as marble—its paleness rendered startling by the sharp contrast of the black skull cap. His form reeled as he sat on the bed, and he clasped his head convulsively with both hands, as if in terror lest it burst.

"I had better call your valet," said Fisher, nervously.

"No, no!" gasped the Baron. "You are a medical man, and I shall have to trust you. There

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is something—wrong—here." With a spasmodic gesture he vaguely indicated the top of his head.

"But I am not—" stammered Fisher.

"No words!" exclaimed the Russian, imperiously. "Act at once—there must be no delay. Unscrew the top of my head!"

Savitch tore off his skull cap and flung it aside. Fisher has no words to describe the bewilderment with which he beheld the actual fabric of the Baron's cranium. The skull cap had concealed the fact that the entire top of Savitch's head was a dome of polished silver.

"Unscrew it!" said Savitch again.

Fisher reluctantly placed both hands upon the silver skull and exerted a gentle pressure toward the left. The top yielded, turning easily and truly in its threads.

"Faster!" said the Baron, faintly. "I tell you no time must be lost." Then he swooned.

At this instant there was a sound of voices in the outer room, and the door leading into the Baron's bed-chamber was violently flung open and as violently closed. The new-comer was a short, spare man of middle age, with a keen visage and piercing, deep-set little gray eyes. He stood for a few seconds scrutinizing Fisher with a sharp, almost fiercely jealous regard.

The Baron recovered his consciousness and opened his eyes.

"Dr. Rapperschwyll!" he exclaimed.

Dr. Rapperschwyll, with a few rapid strides,

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approached the bed and confronted Fisher and Fisher's patient. "What is all this?" he angrily demanded.

Without waiting for a reply he laid his hand rudely upon Fisher's arm and pulled him away from the Baron. Fisher, more and more astonished, made no resistance, but suffered himself to be led, or pushed, toward the door. Dr. Rapperschwyll opened the door wide enough to give the American exit, and then closed it with a vicious slam. A quick click informed Fisher that the key had been turned in the lock.

II.

THE next morning Fisher met Savitch coming from the Trinkhalle. The Baron bowed with cold politeness and passed on. Later in the day a valet de place handed to Fisher a small parcel, with the message: "Dr. Rapperschwyll supposes that this will be sufficient." The parcel contained two gold pieces of twenty marks.

Fisher gritted his teeth. "He shall have back his forty marks," he muttered to himself, "but I will have his confounded secret in return."

Then Fisher discovered that even a Polish countess has her uses in the social economy.

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Mrs. Fisher's table d'hôte friend was amiability itself, when approached by Fisher (through Fisher's wife) on the subject of the Baron Savitch of Moscow. Know anything about the Baron Savitch? Of course she did, and about everybody else worth knowing in Europe. Would she kindly communicate her knowledge? Of course she would, and be enchanted to gratify in the slightest degree the charming curiosity of her Americaine. It was quite refreshing for a *blasée* old woman, who had long since ceased to feel much interest in contemporary men, women, things and events, to encounter one so recently from the boundless prairies of the new world as to cherish a piquant inquisitiveness about the affairs of the grand monde. Ah! yes, she would very willingly communicate the history of the Baron Savitch of Moscow, if that would amuse her dear Americaine.

The Polish countess abundantly redeemed her promise, throwing in for good measure many choice bits of gossip and scandalous anecdotes about the Russian nobility, which are not relevant to the present narrative. Her story, as summarized by Fisher, was this:

The Baron Savitch was not of an old creation. There was a mystery about his origin that had never been satisfactorily solved in St. Petersburg or in Moscow. It was said by some that he was a foundling from the Vospitatelnoi Dom. Others believed him to be the unacknowledged son of a certain illustrious personage nearly related to the

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House of Romanoff. The latter theory was the more probable, since it accounted in a measure for the unexampled success of his career from the day that he was graduated at the University of Dorpat.

Rapid and brilliant beyond precedent this career had been. He entered the diplomatic service of the Czar, and for several years was attached to the legations at Vienna, London, and Paris. Created a Baron before his twenty-fifth birthday for the wonderful ability displayed in the conduct of negotiations of supreme importance and delicacy with the House of Hapsburg, he became a pet of Gortchakoff's, and was given every opportunity for the exercise of his genius in diplomacy. It was even said in well-informed circles at St. Petersburg that the guiding mind which directed Russia's course throughout the entire Eastern complication, which planned the campaign on the Danube, effected the combinations that gave victory to the Czar's soldiers, and which meanwhile held Austria aloof, neutralized the immense power of Germany, and exasperated England only to the point where wrath expends itself in harmless threats, was the brain of the young Baron Savitch. It was certain that he had been with Ignatieff at Constantinople when the trouble was first fomented, with Shouvaloff in England at the time of the secret conference agreement, with the Grand Duke Nicholas at Adrianople when the protocol of an armistice was signed, and would soon be in Berlin behind the scenes of the Congress. where it was expected that

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he would outwit the statesmen of all Europe, and play with Bismarck and Disraeli as a strong man plays with two kicking babies.

But the countess had concerned herself very little with this handsome young man's achievements in politics. She had been more particularly interested in his social career. His success in that field had been not less remarkable. Although no one knew with positive certainty his father's name, he had conquered an absolute supremacy in the most exclusive circles surrounding the imperial court. His influence with the Czar himself was supposed to be unbounded. Birth apart, he was considered the best *parti* in Russia. From poverty and by the sheer force of intellect he had won for himself a colossal fortune. Report gave him forty million roubles, and doubtless report did not exceed the fact. Every speculative enterprise which he undertook, and they were many and various, was carried to sure success by the same qualities of cool, unerring judgment, far-reaching sagacity, and apparently superhuman power of organizing, combining, and controlling, which had made him in politics the phenomenon of the age.

About Dr. Rapperschwyll? Yes, the countess knew him by reputation and by sight. He was the medical man in constant attendance upon the Baron Savitch, whose high-strung mental organization rendered him susceptible to sudden and alarming attacks of illness. Dr. Rapperschwyll was a Swiss—had originally been a watchmaker or

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artisan of some kind, she had heard. For the rest, he was a commonplace little old man, devoted to his profession and to the Baron, and evidently devoid of ambition, since he wholly neglected to turn the opportunities of his position and connections to the advancement of his personal fortunes.

Fortified with this information, Fisher felt better prepared to grapple with Rapperschwyll for the possession of the secret. For five days he lay in wait for the Swiss physician. On the sixth day the desired opportunity unexpectedly presented itself.

Half way up the Mercuriusberg, late in the afternoon, he encountered the custodian of the ruined tower, coming down. "No, the tower was not closed. A gentleman was up there, making observations of the country, and he, the custodian, would be back in an hour or two." So Fisher kept on his way.

The upper part of this tower is in a dilapidated condition. The lack of a stairway to the summit is supplied by a temporary wooden ladder. Fisher's head and shoulders were hardly through the trap that opens to the platform, before he discovered that the man already there was the man whom he sought. Dr. Rapperschwyll was studying the topography of the Black Forest through a pair of field glasses.

Fisher announced his arrival by an opportune stumble and a noisy effort to recover himself, at the same instant aiming a stealthy kick at the top

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most round of the ladder, and scrambling ostentatiously over the edge of the trap. The ladder went down thirty or forty feet with a racket, clattering and banging against the walls of the tower.

Dr. Rapperschwyll at once appreciated the situation. He turned sharply around, and remarked with a sneer, "Monsieur is unaccountably awkward." Then he scowled and showed his teeth, for he recognized Fisher.

"It *is* rather unfortunate," said the New Yorker, with imperturbable coolness. "We shall be imprisoned here a couple of hours at the shortest. Let us congratulate ourselves that we each have intelligent company, besides a charming landscape to contemplate."

The Swiss coldly bowed, and resumed his topographical studies. Fisher lighted a cigar.

"I also desire," continued Fisher, puffing clouds of smoke in the direction of the Teufelmühle, "to avail myself of this opportunity to return forty marks of yours, which reached me, I presume, by a mistake."

"If Monsieur the American physician was not satisfied with his fee," rejoined Rapperschwyll, venomously, "he can without doubt have the affair adjusted by applying to the Baron's valet."

Fisher paid no attention to this thrust, but calmly laid the gold pieces upon the parapet, directly under the nose of the Swiss.

"I could not think of accepting any fee," he said, with deliberate emphasis. "I was abundant-

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ly rewarded for my trifling services by the novelty and interest of the case."

The Swiss scanned the American's countenance long and steadily with his sharp little gray eyes. At length he said, carelessly :

"Monsieur is a man of science?"

"Yes," replied Fisher, with a mental reservation in favor of all sciences save that which illuminates and dignifies our national game.

"Then," continued Dr. Rapperschwyll, "Monsieur will perhaps acknowledge that a more beautiful or more extensive case of trephining has rarely come under his observation."

Fisher slightly raised his eyebrows.

"And Monsieur will also understand, being a physician," continued Dr. Rapperschwyll, "the sensitiveness of the Baron himself, and of his friends upon the subject. He will therefore pardon my seeming rudeness at the time of his discovery."

"He is smarter than I supposed," thought Fisher. "He holds all the cards, while I have nothing—nothing, except a tolerably strong nerve when it comes to a game of bluff."

"I deeply regret that sensitiveness," he continued, aloud, "for it had occurred to me that an accurate account of what I saw, published in one of the scientific journals of England or America, would excite wide attention, and no doubt be received with interest on the Continent."

"What you saw?" cried the Swiss, sharply. "It

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is false. You saw nothing—when I entered you had not even removed the——"

Here he stopped short and muttered to himself, as if cursing his own impetuosity. Fisher celebrated his advantage by tossing away his half-burned cigar and lighting a fresh one.

"Since you compel me to be frank," Dr. Rapperschwyll went on, with visibly increasing nervousness. "I will inform you that the Baron has assured me that you saw nothing. I interrupted you in the act of removing the silver cap."

"I will be equally frank," replied Fisher, stiffening his face for a final effort. "On that point, the Baron is not a competent witness. He was in a state of unconsciousness for some time before you entered. Perhaps I was removing the silver cap when you interrupted me——"

Dr. Rapperschwyll turned pale.

"And, perhaps," said Fisher, coolly, "I was replacing it."

The suggestion of this possibility seemed to strike Rapperschwyll like a sudden thunderbolt from the clouds. His knees parted, and he almost sank to the floor. He put his hands before his eyes, and wept like a child, or, rather, like a broken old man.

"He will publish it! He will publish it to the court and to the world!" he cried, hysterically. "And at this crisis——"

Then, by a desperate effort, the Swiss appeared to recover to some extent his self-control. He

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paced the diameter of the platform for several minutes, with his head bent and his arms folded across the breast. Turning again to his companion, he said :

" If any sum you may name will——"

Fisher cut the proposition short with a laugh.

" Then," said Rapperschwyll, " if—if I throw myself on your generosity——"

" Well ?" demanded Fisher.

" And ask a promise, on your honor, of absolute silence concerning what you have seen ?"

" Silence until such time as the Baron Savitch shall have ceased to exist ?"

" That will suffice," said Rapperschwyll. " For when he ceases to exist I die. And your conditions ?"

" The whole story, here and now, and without reservation."

" It is a terrible price to ask me," said Rapperschwyll, " but larger interests than my pride are at stake. You shall hear the story.

" I was bred a watchmaker," he continued, after a long pause, " in the Canton of Zurich. It is not a matter of vanity when I say that I achieved a marvellous degree of skill in the craft. I developed a faculty of invention that led me into a series of experiments regarding the capabilities of purely mechanical combinations. I studied and improved upon the best automata ever constructed by human ingenuity. Babbage's calculating machine especially interested me. I saw in Babbage's idea the

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germ of something infinitely more important to the world.

"Then I threw up my business and went to Paris to study physiology. I spent three years at the Sorbonne and perfected myself in that branch of knowledge. Meanwhile, my pursuits had extended far beyond the purely physical sciences. Psychology engaged me for a time; and then I ascended into the domain of sociology, which, when adequately understood, is the summary and final application of all knowledge.

"It was after years of preparation, and as the outcome of all my studies, that the great idea of my life, which had vaguely haunted me ever since the Zurich days, assumed at last a well-defined and perfect form."

The manner of Dr. Rapperschwyll had changed from distrustful reluctance to frank enthusiasm. The man himself seemed transformed. Fisher listened attentively and without interrupting the relation. He could not help fancying that the necessity of yielding the secret, so long and so jealously guarded by the physician, was not entirely distasteful to the enthusiast.

"Now, attend, Monsieur," continued Dr. Rapperschwyll, "to several separate propositions which may seem at first to have no direct bearing on each other.

"My endeavors in mechanism had resulted in a machine which went far beyond Babbage's in its powers of calculation. Given the data, there

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was no limit to the possibilities in this direction. Babbage's cogwheels and pinions calculated logarithms, calculated an eclipse. It was fed with figures, and produced results in figures. Now, the relations of cause and effect are as fixed and unalterable as the laws of arithmetic. Logic is, or should be, as exact a science as mathematics. My new machine was fed with facts, and produced conclusions. In short, it *reasoned;* and the results of its reasoning were always true, while the results of human reasoning are often, if not always, false. The source of error in human logic is what the philosophers call the 'personal equation.' My machine eliminated the personal equation; it proceeded from cause to effect, from premise to conclusion, with steady precision. The human intellect is fallible; my machine was, and is, infallible in its processes.

"Again, physiology and anatomy had taught me the fallacy of the medical superstition which holds the gray matter of the brain and the vital principle to be inseparable. I had seen men living with pistol balls imbedded in the medulla oblongata. I had seen the hemispheres and the cerebellum removed from the crania of birds and small animals, and yet they did not die. I believed that, though the brain were to be removed from a human skull, the subject would not die, although he would certainly be divested of the intelligence which governed all save the purely involuntary actions of his body.

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"Once more: a profound study of history from the sociological point of view, and a not inconsiderable practical experience of human nature, had convinced me that the greatest geniuses that ever existed were on a plane not so very far removed above the level of average intellect. The grandest peaks in my native country, those which all the world knows by name, tower only a few hundred feet above the countless unnamed peaks that surround them. Napoleon Bonaparte towered only a little over the ablest men around him. Yet that little was everything, and he overran Europe. A man who surpassed Napoleon, as Napoleon surpassed Murat, in the mental qualities which transmute thought into fact, would have made himself master of the whole world.

"Now, to fuse these three propositions into one: suppose that I take a man, and, by removing the brain that enshrines all the errors and failures of his ancestors away back to the origin of the race, remove all sources of weakness in his future career. Suppose, that in place of the fallible intellect which I have removed, I endow him with an artificial intellect that operates with the certainty of universal laws. Suppose that I launch this superior being. who reasons truly, into the hurly burly of his inferiors, who reason falsely, and await the inevitable result with the tranquillity of a philosopher.

"Monsieur, you have my secret. That is precisely what I have done. In Moscow, where my friend Dr. Duchat had charge of the new institu

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tion of St. Vasili for hopeless idiots, I found a boy of eleven whom they called Stépan Borovitch. Since he was born, he had not seen, heard, spoken or thought. Nature had granted him, it was believed, a fraction of the sense of smell, and perhaps a fraction of the sense of taste, but of even this there was no positive ascertainment. Nature had walled in his soul most effectually. Occasional inarticulate murmurings, and an incessant knitting and kneading of the fingers were his only manifestations of energy. On bright days they would place him in a little rocking-chair, in some spot where the sun fell warm, and he would rock to and fro for hours, working his slender fingers and mumbling forth his satisfaction at the warmth in the plaintive and unvarying refrain of idiocy. The boy was thus situated when I first saw him.

"I begged Stépan Borovitch of my good friend Dr. Duchat. If that excellent man had not long since died he should have shared in my triumph. I took Stépan to my home and plied the saw and the knife. I could operate on that poor, worthless, useless, hopeless travesty of humanity as fearlessly and as recklessly as upon a dog bought or caught for vivisection. That was a little more than twenty years ago. To-day Stépan Borovitch wields more power than any other man on the face of the earth. In ten years he will be the autocrat of Europe, the master of the world. He never errs; for the machine that reasons beneath his silver skull never makes a mistake."

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Fisher pointed downward at the old custodian of the tower, who was seen toiling up the hill.

"Dreamers," continued Dr. Rapperschwyll, "have speculated on the possibility of finding among the ruins of the older civilizations some brief inscription which shall change the foundations of human knowledge. Wiser men deride the dream, and laugh at the idea of scientific kabbala. The wiser men are fools. Suppose that Aristotle had discovered on a cuneiform-covered tablet at Nineveh the few words, 'Survival of the Fittest.' Philosophy would have gained twenty-two hundred years. I will give you, in almost as few words, a truth equally pregnant. *The ultimate evolution of the creature is into the creator.* Perhaps it will be twenty-two hundred years before the truth finds general acceptance, yet it is not the less a truth. The Baron Savitch is my creature, and I am his creator—creator of the ablest man in Europe, the ablest man in the world.

"Here is our ladder," Monsieur. "I have fulfilled my part of the agreement. Remember yours."

III.

After a two months' tour of Switzerland and the Italian lakes, the Fishers found themselves at the Hotel Splendide in Paris, surrounded by people

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from the States. It was a relief to Fisher, after his somewhat bewildering experience at Baden, followed by a surfeit of stupendous and ghostly snow peaks, to be once more among those who discriminated between a straight flush and a crooked straight, and whose bosoms thrilled responsive to his own at the sight of the star-spangled banner. It was particularly agreeable for him to find at the Hotel Splendide, in a party of Easterners who had come over to see the Exposition, Miss Bella Ward, of Portland, a pretty and bright girl, affianced to his best friend in New York.

With much less pleasure, Fisher learned that the Baron Savitch was in Paris, fresh from the Berlin Congress, and that he was the lion of the hour with the select few who read between the written lines of politics and knew the dummies of diplomacy from the real players in the tremendous game. Dr. Rapperschwyll was not with the Baron. He was detained in Switzerland, at the deathbed of his aged mother.

This last piece of information was welcome to Fisher. The more he reflected upon the interview on the Mercuriusberg, the more strongly he felt it to be his intellectual duty to persuade himself that the whole affair was an illusion, not a reality. He would have been glad, even at the sacrifice of his confidence in his own astuteness, to believe that the Swiss doctor had been amusing himself at the expense of his credulity. But the remembrance of the scene in the Baron's bedroom at the Badischer

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Hof was too vivid to leave the slightest ground for this theory. He was obliged to be content with the thought that he should soon place the broad Atlantic between himself and a creature so unnatural, so dangerous, so monstrously impossible as the Baron Savitch.

Hardly a week had passed before he was thrown again into the society of that impossible person.

The ladies of the American party met the Russian Baron at a ball in the New Continental Hotel. They were charmed with his handsome face, his refinement of manner, his intelligence and wit. They met him again at the American Minister's, and, to Fisher's unspeakable consternation, the acquaintance thus established began to make rapid progress in the direction of intimacy. Baron Savitch became a frequent visitor at the Hotel Splendide.

Fisher does not like to dwell upon this period. For a month his peace of mind was rent alternately by apprehension and disgust. He is compelled to admit that the Baron's demeanor toward himself was most friendly, although no allusion was made on either side to the incident at Baden. But the knowledge that no good could come to his friends from this association with a being in whom the moral principle had no doubt been supplanted by a system of cog-gear, kept him continually in a state of distraction. He would gladly have explained to his American friends the true character of the Russian, that he was not a man of healthy

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mental organization, but merely a marvel of mechanical ingenuity, constructed upon a principle subversive of all society as at present constituted—in short, a monster whose very existence must ever be revolting to right-minded persons with brains of honest gray and white. But the solemn promise to Dr. Rapperschwyll sealed his lips.

A trifling incident suddenly opened his eyes to the alarming character of the situation, and filled his heart with a new horror.

One evening, a few days before the date designated for the departure of the American party from Havre for home, Fisher happened to enter the private parlor which was, by common consent, the headquarters of his set. At first he thought that the room was unoccupied. Soon he perceived, in the recess of a window, and partly obscured by the drapery of the curtain, the forms of the Baron Savitch and Miss Ward of Portland. They did not observe his entrance. Miss Ward's hand was in the Baron's hand, and she was looking up into his handsome face with an expression which Fisher could not misinterpret.

Fisher coughed, and going to another window, pretended to be interested in affairs on the Boulevard. The couple emerged from the recess. Miss Ward's face was ruddy with confusion, and she immediately withdrew. Not a sign of embarrassment was visible on the Baron's countenance. He greeted Fisher with perfect self-possession, and be-

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gan to talk of the great balloon in the Place du Carrousel.

Fisher pitied but could not blame the young lady. He believed her still loyal at heart to her New York engagement. He knew that her loyalty could not be shaken by the blandishments of any man on earth. He recognized the fact that she was under the spell of a power more than human. Yet what would be the outcome? He could not tell her all; his promise bound him. It would be useless to appeal to the generosity of the Baron; no human sentiments governed his exorable purposes. Must the affair drift on while he stood tied and helpless? Must this charming and innocent girl be sacrificed to the transient whim of an automaton? Allowing that the Baron's intentions were of the most honorable character, was the situation any less horrible? Marry a Machine! His own loyalty to his friend in New York, his regard for Miss Ward, alike loudly called on him to act with promptness.

And, apart from all private interest, did he not owe a plain duty to society, to the liberties of the world? Was Savitch to be permitted to proceed in the career laid out for him by his creator, Dr. Rapperschwyll? He (Fisher) was the only man in the world in a position to thwart the ambitious programme. Was there ever greater need of a Brutus?

Between doubts and fears, the last days of Fisher's stay in Paris were wretched beyond description. On the morning of the steamer day he had almost made up his mind to act.

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The train for Havre departed at noon, and at eleven o'clock the Baron Savitch made his appearance at the Hotel Splendide to bid farewell to his American friends. Fisher watched Miss Ward closely. There was a constraint in her manner which fortified his resolution. The Baron incidentally remarked that he should make it his duty and pleasure to visit America within a very few months, and that he hoped then to renew the acquaintances now interrupted. As Savitch spoke, Fisher observed that his eyes met Miss Ward's, while the slightest possible blush colored her cheeks. Fisher knew that the case was desperate, and demanded a desperate remedy.

He now joined the ladies of the party in urging the Baron to join them in the hasty lunch that was to precede the drive to the station. Savitch gladly accepted the cordial invitation. Wine he politely but firmly declined, pleading the absolute prohibition of his physician. Fisher left the room for an instant, and returned with the black bottle which had figured in the Baden episode.

"The Baron," he said, "has already expressed his approval of the noblest of our American products, and he knows that this beverage has good medical endorsement." So saying, he poured the remaining contents of the Kentucky bottle into a glass, and presented it to the Russian.

Savitch hesitated. His previous experience with the nectar was at the same time a temptation and a warning, yet he did not wish to seem discourte-

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ous. A chance remark from Miss Ward decided him.

"The Baron," she said, with a smile, "will certainly not refuse to wish us *bon voyage* in the American fashion."

Savitch drained the glass and the conversation turned to other matters. The carriages were already below. The parting compliments were being made, when Savitch suddenly pressed his hands to his forehead and clutched at the back of a chair. The ladies gathered around him in alarm.

"It is nothing," he said faintly; "a temporary dizziness."

"There is no time to be lost," said Fisher, pressing forward. "The train leaves in twenty minutes. Get ready at once, and I will meanwhile attend to our friend."

Fisher hurriedly led the Baron to his own bedroom. Savitch fell back upon the bed. The Baden symptoms repeated themselves. In two minutes the Russian was unconscious.

Fisher looked at his watch. He had three minutes to spare. He turned the key in the lock of the door and touched the knob of the electric annunciator.

Then, gaining the mastery of his nerves by one supreme effort for self-control, Fisher pulled the deceptive wig and the black skull-cap from the Baron's head. "Heaven forgive me if I am making a fearful mistake!" he thought. But I believe it to be best for ourselves and for the world." Rapidly, but with a steady hand, he unscrewed the silver dome.

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The Mechanism lay exposed before his eyes. The Baron groaned. Ruthlessly Fisher tore out the wondrous machine. He had no time and no inclination to examine it. He caught up a newspaper and hastily enfolded it. He thrust the bundle into his open travelling-bag. Then he screwed the silver top firmly upon the Baron's head, and replaced the skull-cap and the wig.

All this was done before the servant answered the bell. "The Baron Savitch is ill," said Fisher to the attendant, when he came. "There is no cause for alarm. Send at once to the Hotel de l'Athénée for his valet, Auguste." In twenty seconds Fisher was in a cab, whirling toward the Station St. Lazare.

When the steamship Pereire was well out at sea, with Ushant five hundred miles in her wake, and countless fathoms of water beneath her keel, Fisher took a newspaper parcel from his travelling-bag. His teeth were firm set and his lips rigid. He carried the heavy parcel to the side of the ship and dropped it into the Atlantic. It made a little eddy in the smooth water, and sank out of sight. Fisher fancied that he heard a wild, despairing cry, and put his hands to his ears to shut out the sound. A gull came circling over the steamer—the cry may have been the gull's.

Fisher felt a light touch upon his arm. He turned quickly around. Miss Ward was standing at his side, close to the rail.

"Bless me, how white you are!" she said. "What in the world have vou been doing?"

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"I have been preserving the liberties of two continents," slowly replied Fisher, "and perhaps saving your own peace of mind."

"Indeed!" said she; "and how have you done that?"

"I have done it," was Fisher's grave answer, "by throwing overboard the Baron Savitch."

Miss Ward burst into a ringing laugh. "You are sometimes too droll, Mr. Fisher," she said.

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YOUNG MOLL'S PEEVY.

By C. A. Stephens.

VILLATE'S "drive" of logs had jammed at the foot of Red Rapids in the very throat of the main "pitch," where the Aux Lièvres falls over the ledges into the "glut-hole" fifty feet below. Named "glut-hole" by the river-men; for lumber falling in here will sometimes circle a month, unless poled out. The waters whirl and are drawn down with a peculiar sinuous motion. Bodies going over are long engulfed, and sometimes never reappear, for the basin is of great depth and there are caverns under water beneath the shelving ledges, such as the drivers call *cachots d'enfer*, and have invested with a superstitious character, as the abode of evil spirits of the flood —a thing not greatly to be wondered at; for a wilder locality could hardly be cited, its rugged cliffs of red sandstone, hung with enormous lichens,

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like sides of leather, and overhung from high above with shaggy black spruces.

There were seven and a-half million feet of lumber in Villate's drive that spring. Every stick of it went into the great jam above the glut-hole. The rough fortunes of youth made me an eye-witness of the scene. A wilder spectacle I never saw throughout the lumbering region during a space of eight years. The gates of the dams at the foot of all the lakes were up; the volume of water was immense. Rocks, which in summer stand twenty feet out of the rapids, were now under water. The torrent came pouring down the long incline, black and swift as an arrow, and went over into the pool at one thunderous plunge, throwing up a vast column of mist. Two ledges only, situated in the very throat of the "pitch," showed above water. These rocks the lumbering company had designed to blast out the previous autumn, but had been prevented by heavy rains. They then stood twenty-seven feet out of water. Now their crests are barely exposed, and the flood washes over them in its mighty rhythm-motion. In the rapids the whole stream is compressed to a width of a little more than seventy yards.

A light jam had formed that morning at a place the drivers called a *tournant d'eau*, about a mile above. This was broken by getting a haul on it from the shore with a dog-warp. Thereby several thousand logs were liberated at once, and went down together into the rapids. The older drivers

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exclaimed that it would make mischief when it started; but nothing could be done; it broke and went out with a rush. We, who were ahead, ran on down the ledges to see it go through the falls, and we had to run fast to keep up. The instant the logs entered the rapids they left us behind. We could see them going down, however, end over end, and hear them "boom" against the sunken rocks. Turtlotte and a Welshman named Finfrock were ahead. I heard Turtlotte call out in French that the logs were jamming, and saw the butt ends of great sticks fly up, glittering, out of the water. The logs had struck and hung on one of the centre rocks, and on the shelving ledges upon the east side. The ends of three large sticks, three or four feet across, stood out fifteen feet or more. We ran on, clambering from crag to crag, till we came to a point looking down on the glut, sixty feet beneath; and that was about near enough, for the ends of the logs flew up almost on a level with our eyes, as they went over, and the spray drenched our faces. The ledges under our feet trembled as if an earthquake were shaking them, and not a word could be heard, even when shouted in the ear. The combined noises were louder than thunder, heavier, deeper. It was a warm forenoon, and the sun shone into the rock dazzlingly bright, making a vivid rainbow. It was the hottest, maddest chasm that can well be imagined; and to see that brilliant rainbow hanging there so still and motionless amidst all that uproar, gave one a queer sensation.

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Old man Villate himself, with his red cap over his ears, came puffing down, shouting at the top of his lungs. We could see his lips fly. The hitch was betwixt the shelving ledges on the east side and one of the mid-channel rocks. It was not one log that had caught, else the weight of the water would have broken it out. It appeared that two large sticks had come down with the ends lying across each other, and a third log, perhaps several logs, overlying these. When the current sucked them through the rapid, between the centre rock and the shore ledges, the outward ends of the crossed logs struck on both sides. Instantly the current and the momentum of the overlying logs thrust the submerged ends of the cross among the rocks on the bottom of the channel, and the momentarily increasing weight of logs held them there—this at least was the theory at the time. When first we got down there, however, there were more than a thousand logs in the glut; and the ends stood up like a porcupine's quills, at every conceivable angle. The obstructing logs in the throat of the fall bore the pressure rather lengthwise than across the fibre. These sticks were of yellow spruce, fifty feet long, and fully three feet through. Such logs, when green, will bear an enormous strain. From the way the exposed ends sprang we knew they were buckling like steel rods, yet they held pertinaciously.

The river above was covered with logs. Scores came shooting down every minute, striking into

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the jam like arrows. The most of these stuck in it. Some few went clean over it, or through it, for the first ten minutes, into the hole below. Logs would glance from the slippery black rocks and go a hundred feet clear of the water, such was the strength of the rapid. I saw sticks of free pine—where they struck the rocks one half on—go in halves from end to end like split-beans—logs forty and fifty feet long; yet the owners never cease to wonder how the lumber gets so badly "broomed up;" for the ends of the logs resemble nothing so much as a paint-brush.

The warps were brought, and Villate called for volunteers to go down, or rather be let down, the ledges and prize off the shore ends of the jammed logs with "peevies." There were plenty of bold fellows; but every man hesitated. Murmurs of "*certaine mort*," "*sur mort*," "*porte du tombeau*," "*porte d'enfer*," arose and were repeated.

"It's a hard world, but I wants to tarry in it a spell longer, boss!" said one grizzled old Yankee from the Maine rivers, with a sage shake of his long head. We all knew that when the jam started it would go through like an avalanche. Whoever was down there would have to go with it—into the glut-hole.

In an hour the jam had grown enormously. For a hundred rods up the rapid the channel was full of lumber, "churning" and battering itself. The mass had swayed off to the west bank and was piling up against the ledges on the opposite side.

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The mighty pressure of the torrent kept rolling the logs, one over the other, till the top of the pile was in places thirty or forty feet out of the water. The bottom logs were wedged into the bed of the stream. The flood, thus dammed and held back, rose higher and higher, rushing through and among the mass with a strange hollow roar which changed the note of the fall. Where it hung in the throat of the pitch, the mass kept rising and falling with the peculiar rhythmic motion of the water. We expected each moment to see it break out and go down; but the tough spruce logs held.

By noon, all the crew had come up. The jam filled the whole river for a third of a mile back from the fall, so completely that during the afternoon the west bank gangs crossed on it to the east side. We lighted our fires on the ledges; and as the evening advanced it was a picturesque sight —a hundred and fifty red-shirted drivers camping there and sitting in messes about their coarse fare.

All the next day we worked with the warps. Nooses were dropped over the upright ends of the logs at the foot of the jam, and the whole gang was set to pull on them. Later in the day, a heavy capstan was rigged. The hawsers broke like twine. It was impossible to start a log, so tremendous was the weight of water and lumber combined.

Next day, the jam was mined with powder placed in water-tight molasses-casks and connected with fire at the top of the ledges by means of tarred fuses. The blasts blew out splinters freely,

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but failed to break or dislodge the large sticks. Villate fumed and sweated. Unless the drive went down to market, not a dollar would be paid to one of us; so he declared. "If you want your pay, break the jam, was his constant exhortation, enforced by vigorous curses; and, indeed, we had been hired on these terms; wages to be paid when the drive reached Montreal—not before. This is a common rule, or used to be; the men have thus a strong interest in the driving.

A plan was mooted among the messes that following night, to cut out the front logs. The same scheme has been often put in execution. It was argued that by stretching a warping-line across the rapids, from cliff to cliff, directly over the foot of the jam, a man might be lowered on it, with his axe, and cut away the logs. A large "basket" —so it was talked—might be swung on the cable. By slackening the line the axe-man could be lowered to the logs; and the instant the sticks cracked under the strokes, he could leap to the "basket" and be pulled out of harm's way, and let the jam go through under him. The idea gained favor. The following morning the end of one of the seven hundred foot lines was taken across on the jam to the ledges on the west bank. Fifty men went over with it, to handle it. With a hundred men there was no difficulty in lowering and raising it at will. When drawn taut, it hung sixty feet above the foot of the jam. One of the Indian drivers, named Lahmunt, had been at work weaving a "basket"

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of ash strip; and as soon as this novel carriage was finished and slung on the cable, the project was ready for trial. While the project was being talked over, several of the drivers had declared themselves willing to undertake the feat; but now that the basket was slung, and after seeing it drawn out over the abyss, they were less disposed to proffer their services. It needed strong nerves and a stout heart to gaze into that foaming gulf and not turn dizzy.

There was among us a youngster whom the old drivers called "Young Moll's Peevy." Young Moll was a half-breed (French and Indian) girl, or rather woman at this time, of thirty or thirty-three, and the mother of this boy. Some of the drivers said that his rightful patronymic was Skelly; but this was a rather obscure matter.

She lived at one of those little half-savage villages such as are only to be found in the backwoods of Canada; and her name was a far too commonly spoken one with the drivers, though not more so than many another. Society in these parts had not taken high orders. Nature had her own way pretty much; they deemed it little sin. Even the omnipresent Romish priest has somehow failed to get much control over the average river-driver, always too much a nomad to feel the continued influence of local sanctuaries.

The young woman realized the prevailing ideal of beauty; not a very refined one, perhaps; but the drivers deemed her fair.

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"The Peevy," as he was half-humorously christened, must have been nearly or quite nineteen. The name was said to have come to him one day in boyhood, when a "peevy" was dropped off a glut into ten or a dozen feet of water. Several of the drivers were trying to hook it up, but kept missing it. The boy, then eleven or twelve years old, had come along unobserved. Presently, and without saying a word, he dropped off the logs, brought up the peevy, and ran away, dripping. The men laughed, and not knowing his name, called him "the peevy-boy." Afterward, when they had found out his mother, they named the urchin "Young Moll's Peevy." This *sobriquet* clung to him even after he had reached manhood and worked with the gang, particularly among the older men who remembered the circumstance. But his mother called him Lotte. A stranger would not easily have believed him the child of the fresh young person who had cared for him; for he was unusually stalwart and bronzed by exposure. Seen together, they rather resembled lad and lass. I thought so, at least, when first I saw her, coming to fetch him dry feeting and a clean shirt. She had walked twenty miles to bring them, through the woods, following our trail. And the way she kissed the young man, aside, was, or looked to be, rather lover-like than maternal. Afterward, on several similar occasions, I was much struck by the *genre* picture they made; the youth had the great black eyes and black curling hair of his mother. The

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drivers used to chaff the fellow unceasingly about Young Moll and the care she took of him, all of which he bore silently, with a troubled, resentful eye; though, otherwise, a great, noble-hearted boy, generous, and inclined to jollity. Really, the rough fellows thought the more of the young woman for this motherly affection and wealth of care for her boy. It was in their uncultured faces, all the while their tongues belied them.

The "basket" was slung and ready. The gang on the other side were gesticulating, with random tugs at the line. There was something whimsical in the way the proposers of the project shrank the one behind the other, with assumed bravado and covert glances at each other's faces.

"I shall have to go myself!" Villate exclaimed, with his characteristic French oath, "I will go myself, fat as I am!" when, rather bashfully, as if afraid of giving offense, young Lotte said he would go "if no better man wanted the job." There were at first muttered "*non-nons*" of dissuasion in the crowd, but nobody claimed the "job," and Villate was but too glad to get a man to go. In a moment the young man had stripped to his shirt and red drawers, taken his axe and stepped to the basket, but it was found to be insecurely attached; and afterward several better modes of handling the line were suggested, in all causing a delay of an hour or two.

And now, as if the birds of spring, just flitting past, had carried the word, or some presentiment of

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evil had found its way to the Peevy's mother, she inopportunely made her appearence. Rad Cates privately touched my elbow and nodded back, up the bank. I then saw young Moll standing partly in the cover of a shrub fir, a hundred yards off, intently watching the gang and the extended warp.

Several of the men saw her, but did not look or notice her after the first glance. "Parbleu! a pity she's here!" one said, and they closed in about Lotte to prevent his seeing her. But the woman soon came nearer, going partly around the crowd, keeping aloof. She had a new plaid shawl, gayly colored, pinned closely about her neck, and her long, black, Indian-like curls showed beneath a beaded scarlet hood. There was an intently anxious look in her eyes; she appeared worn and tired.

"The Peevy "was much too tall a man to be shut up in the crowd. Presently he espied her, and his eye fell. After a time he casually, as it were, made his way back to her. None of us heard what was said. The most instinctively kept their eyes to themselves. The gang on the other side was staring across the chasm. Villate ripped out an oath, and I saw Lotte push the girl aside so roughly that she caught at a shrub to save herself. He walked straight to the brink of the cliff.

"Je suis ici," said he. I never saw him look so manly. We knew his eye was quick and his hand sure. I had little doubt that he would cut the front logs and come up safe. We did not know what the danger was till afterward. He stood up-

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right in the "basket," with one hand on the hawser, to steady himself, and his axe in the other.

At a signal the gang on the west side straightened the line. We paid it out slowly. They drew him out from the brink of the ledge, till the basket was directly over the centre rock. Then gradually we slackened it, and let him down foot by foot, down under the rainbow, where the hot, mad mist flew up in fierce gusts, bearing the strong odor of crushed spruce fibre. He seemed to bear the deafening roar without confusion, and glanced about him quite coolly, as it looked.

Our attention was given closely to his signals and to our task, yet I saw Young Moll coming forward, step by step, as the "basket" went deeper and deeper into the gorge, her eyes riveted on it. She was very pale, and her hands were tightly clenched. The drivers cast ominous glances at her.

"I don't half like the looks of the jade!" I heard muttered, and I think the sight of her filled every one with a sense of foreboding.

As soon as the basket was down to the logs we saw him step out upon them, and thence to the rock. From moment to moment the mist hid him, and transient jets of water, from betwixt the logs, squirted high over his head. Guardedly he planted one boot, shod with the sharp corks, upon one of the large front logs—the one he judged it best to cut away first; the other foot rested on the rock. The "basket" he had placed at his back. We were holding it steadv from both banks, ready to pull it

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up when signaled. Before and beneath him raged the cataract. We saw him raise his axe and strike it into the log. The bright steel flashed in the narrow chasm. At the fourth stroke the great log cracked. He threw the axe and clutched the basket. A mighty crash rang up. The jam had started —was moving —going down—madly splintering—thundering into the glut-hole! The wet splinters all along the rapids went up a hundred feet in air. On both sides the gangs were running backward, hoisting the "basket." It rose twenty feet a second! A hundred and fifty strong men pulled with might and main! As he rose he waved his hand to us.

Ah, God! we were too slow! It was all done in a trice. One great stick, ending over like a fagot, barely missed the basket. Another longer log, whirling up, struck the warp farther out, and hurled him down with it! The cable was torn from our hands! Gone like a flash, into the gulf below! From the one great rough human heart on either bank a groan of pity blended with the roar. "Too d——n bad!" they cried out, in all sincerity, and stood staring.

Then all eyes turned toward the poor fellow's mother. She had thrown up her hands when the timber swept him down, as if to shut out the sight, then dropped them on a sudden, with a moan.

"Catch her!" some one shouted. Half-a-dozen standing nearest sprang forward—for she was standing on the very verge of the rocks. Her eyes had fallen on old man Villate. They were like the eyes

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of one in some mortal agony. The blotched and bloated old rum-butt turned his face aside and downward, and thrust out his hands as if to fight off flame. For their lives the men durst not lay hold of her. She seemed to waver in soul betwixt grief and fury.

A moment after, the men gave a loud shout! She was gone from where she had stood, and the echo of a smothered shriek—tribute of a woman's heart to death—came to our ears. We sprang to look over. There was a glimpse of the bright shawl whirled amid the foam.

"Did she fall?" some one cried out.

"Throwed herself down!" said those who saw it.

We never found trace of either of them. But the jam went out, to the last log. Two hours later the gangs were following the drive down the stream—on to Montreal! But the men had turned sullen. Scarce a laugh or a cheery shout was heard for three days.

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MANMAT'HA.

By Charles De Kay.

I.

ONE day the breeze was talking of grand and simple things in the pines that look across the lower bay at Sandy Hook. The great water spaces were a delicious blue, dotted with the white tops of crushed waves; to the left, Coney Island lay mapped out in bleached surfaces, while beyond and seaward, from the purple sleeve formed by the hills of the Navesink, the Hook ran a brown finger eastward. A hawk which nests among the steep inclines of Todt Hill shot out from a neighboring ravine and hung motionless, but never quiet, in the middle distance.

Birds and beasts will make closer approach to a person clothed in dun-colored garments; therefore it was not odd that the hawk should not notice

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my presence on the pine needles near the crest of the hill. After steering without visible rustle of a feather through the lake of air before me, he stooped all at once, grasped a hedge-sparrow that had been shaking the top of a bush far down the slope, and, rising, bore it to the low branch of a pine not far from my resting-place.

The sun had fallen in a Titanic tragedy of color beyond Prince's Bay. The fierce bird, leisurely occupied in tearing to pieces the little twitterer, was a suitable accompaniment to the bloody drama in the clouds. Watching keenly, I gradually began to picture to myself the sensation of walking unseen to the murderous fowl and suddenly clasping his smooth back with both hands. How startled he would be! But in truth the thought was only a continuation of another that had been floating through my mind while the hawk was wheeling. Unconsciously I had been mumbling to myself from the Nibelungen,—

> "About the tameless dwarf-kin I have heard it said,
> They dwell in hollow mountains; for safety are arrayed
> In what is termed a tarn-kap, of wondrous quality;
> Who hath it on his body preserved is said to be
> From cuttings and from thrustings; of him is none aware
> When he therein is clothèd. Both see can he, and hear
> According as he wishes, yet no one him perceives."

The magic cloak, the tarn-kap, I reasoned, with my eyes on the cruel bird, was only a symbol after all, something physical to make real that invisi-

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bility which we cannot readily conceive. But suddenly—could my wish have been felt?—the hawk gave a hoarse croak of fright, dropped his prey, and, springing heavily into the air, was gone.

He had not looked at me, he had not seen or heard me, nor could I see, far or near, the slightest cause for his terror. But—I heard! Sh-sh-sh—I was aware of a light step in the needles under the tree he had left. Straining my eyes to watch the ground, surely, surely, in a line passing close to my couch, the needles and thin grass were pressed down, as if by a weight applied at even distances! I had remained motionless as a figure of stone, but when a tuft of hepatica, blooming late where the shade was deepest, fell crushed near my hand, I reached out. As luck would have it I was too conscious, too much ashamed at my own folly to act decisively. I did not grasp, I reached out—and touched a living thing.

On such occasions there comes at first the exuberance of joy; then doubt. I had long debated the possibility of invisibles. As far back as I can remember, elfin tales produced an awful wonderment upon my imagination. On long May nights have I not often stolen from the house to watch for elves? A moon after a rain was to my thinking the best for such mysterious beings, when everything was hazy with an imperceptible mist, when the dogwoods had flooded the landscape with sheets of reflected white, and somebody was drawing one veil after another slowly past a golden shield in

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the sky. On such nights, more than once, a boy might have been seen creeping on tiptoe through the open woods, over the great clearing, to the hill-top, where, if anywhere, brownies must play. But none did he espy, nor did the chance-flung cap ever fall upon his eager, outstretched hands. And if in later years the subject still fascinated me, it made me feel what the grown man realizes always more clearly, that fables and fairy tales rest on a solid groundwork of fact. Why, when so many other legends have been verified, should this universal tradition of vanishers and invisibles prove entirely false?

It occurs to one very soon that animal life does exist of so transparent a texture that to all intents and purposes it is invisible. The spawn of frogs, the larvæ of certain fresh-water insects, many marine animals, are of so clear a tissue that they are seen with difficulty. In the tropics a particular inhabitant of smooth seas is as invisible as a piece of glass, and can be detected only in the love season by the color which then mingles in its eyes. On reflection a thousand instances arise of assimilation of animal life to their surroundings, of mimicry of nature with a view to safety. Why, then, by survival of the most transparent, should not some invisible life of a high grade hold a secure position on the earth?

Pondering thus, I had been startled not a little by coming now and again on facts that seemed to bear this out. Strange tracks through untrodden

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grass suggested footsteps of the unseen. Flattened spaces of peculiar shape in the standing rye, where human beings could not have intruded, looked marvellously like human visitation. Or I lay concealed and watched the crows in a road-side field. What was it caused them to look up suddenly and flap away on sooty-fringed wings? No bird, beast, or man came. Then the rats, scampering about under a dock like so many gaunt Virginia swine: all at once came a flurry of whisking tails, and they were off! Yet I had not stirred, nor did anything move on the dock above. Nevertheless all seemed to realize a common danger, a noise of some kind,—perhaps a step? Again, you sit like a block while a snake basks unconscious in the sun, and may watch many hours without event; but sometimes it happens that he raises his head, quivers for an instant his double tongue, and slides off the stump into a bush. At such times put your ear to the earth. Do you not distinguish—or is it all imagination—a sound, a brushing?

It availed me little, then, that I should have considered the subject, or have even gone the length of debating how a man might attain invisibility. Now that I had a tangible proof of the existence of such beings, I was crushed by misgivings. Like many a man before the supposed impossible, I questioned my own sanity. As to the impression, however, the object I had touched or fancied I had touched was at once hard and soft, smooth and rough; I recalled it as each of these in turn, for it

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was moving, and at the moment of contact bounded away as if at the shock of a galvanic current. To my excited mind the dusky woods were becoming oppressive, and so, like the hawk, but slowly and pondering, I betook myself home.

Who that has walked or run through autumn woods at night has not sometimes looked curiously over his shoulder at the sound of following steps? It always proves to be dry leaves whirled after you in your rapid course; but this evening my gait was slow, and the leaves of last year were hard to find; nor could I account, except on the ground of nervous illusion, for the pattering that followed in my rear. Yet there it was, albeit so gentle that had I not stretched every sense to the utmost I am confident no sound would have penetrated to my consciousness. And it was evident that I was thoroughly imposed upon by it, for when the small, irregular pond was reached, which, with a cypress-scattered hillock, occupies the highest point of the main hill to the westward, I halted a moment and considered. How, thought I, will this unseen attendant cross a piece of water? Throwing off my shoes I waded over a shallow arm of the pond, and sat down to watch. Presently in the twilight two wedges of ruffled water were discerned advancing swiftly across the surface, — just such tracks as serpents make in swimming, — a light touch was heard on the bank, and all was still. But then a sudden disgust, unreasoning and childish, mastered me completely; a wave of doubt greater than before

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filled me with disdain of my own imbecility, and I hastened through the orchard to my home, and flung myself into an arm-chair near the window.

The place I had selected long ago as a quiet refuge was a low veranda farm-house, hidden away from north winds under the crest of a hill, and crept over by many rods of honey-suckle. Events had so affected me that I considered nothing left in life but an alternation of hard work and of utter retreat from humanity, and had disposed me favorably toward the ancient apple orchard, and the meagre vegetable and flower garden, which alone remained of a former farm. The barns, the plowed lands, and the fences had disappeared. Only a heavy stone wall with flagged top, which protected the garden from the road, reminded one of a former powerful owner. From the veranda no house was visible; the eye had to travel many miles across the flat lower country to the bay before the distant ships recalled a busy world.

Here, beside myself, lived no one save Rachel, a woman whose Indian origin made it impossible to guess her age. Although she claimed for herself the purest descent from an Indian tribe of a headland a hundred miles to the eastward, and although her features were not without strong marks of her claim, yet in strict truth she was so much mixed with African blood that with most persons she would pass for a negress. Rachel had a talent for cooking breakfasts and suppers from little apparent supply; she was taciturn to speechlessness, hence

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our intercourse was never marred by discord; and while her box was kept supplied with strong tobacco, a slender meal of some kind was never wanting; and it was served in silence.

For two years Rachel and I had lived in this silent, limited partnership. My home was cool and soundless as the grave, a place in which the mind could stretch its shriveled wings, where everything could be done mechanically and without fear of a sudden jar into disagreeable reality. When of an afternoon I stepped from the hurrying world into the first quiet woods on the way to my home, a great door swung to behind me and another life began, in which Rachel's figure and swarthy, heavy-featured face had long ceased to interfere with my meditation.

This night, however, before the meal was served, the kitchen door opened and my housekeeper's inscrutable dull eyes rolled around the walls of the room; then it closed. What had happened? Why on this night had Rachel noticed my arrival? At supper I broke our unspoken compact and addressed her.

"Rachel, what made you look in just now? Has anything happened?"

The woman made no reply, yet there was evidence in her manner that she was groping for an answer. Presently to a second demand she made a reply that startled me:—

"Heard two of you."

So, another ear had detected the steps as well as

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my own! Then the being, whatever it was, must be in the room, possibly at my elbow; or, seated perchance on that chair before me, was regarding me steadfastly! Except for the excitement bred of a new sensation, it was not a pleasant thought; nevertheless, I pulled a second chair to the table and filled a second plate with food; then, with my eyes fixed on the plate, continued the meal. It was all in vain. Nothing further was seen or heard.

This was my first definite encounter with that unseen which I would have called a spirit had I been a spiritualist. But I could not force myself to the gross materialism of calling this invisible existence a spirit, for tangibility was a quality I could not associate with pure spirit, and I had touched it.

Having once followed me, it seemed thenceforth to take up quarters in my house, at least for the evening and morning hours of the day, and strange as it was, I soon learned to regard the presence of a third person as an established fact; indeed, I came to believe that in some instances a faint breathing might be detected. Nevertheless I would not leave anything to the possibilities of imagination, but was always experimenting, with a view to prove still more clearly that there was no illusion possible. To this end a brass and steel rod, fitted between the floor and a projection from the wall, was connected with an indicator which moved in a large arc when the slightest touch shook the floor. By this means my ears were reinforced by sight.

I also began systematically to conceal from the

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unknown guest the fact that I suspected its presence; but at last the point was reached where, to protect my own reason, it must be settled whether it was all a series of illusions or a sober truth.

For by dint of thought a scheme had been perfected, and on a Sunday morning, when as usual Rachel had disappeared, no man has ever known whither; when, according to its custom, the strange visitant had also, to all appearance, withdrawn,—on a Sunday morning I hastened to put my plan in action. On the main floor in the rear of the house was a chamber, into which the sounds had sometimes intruded, which was small, bare, and lighted by one deep window looking directly out on the orchard. This window I had grated strongly with heavy wire on the outside, where the orchard hill rose steeply from the house; and over against the window, in the wall between chamber and dining-room, was a high closet, in which I had stored a strong net, such as fishermen use for their seines. Fastening stout wires to the ceiling from one end of the room to the other, to be used for slides, and rigging several small blocks above the window and near the floor, I stretched the necessary ropes from closet to blocks and back again, laid everything ready for instant use, cleared the room of furniture, and awaited events.

There was no fear of interruption from Rachel, for during the years we had lived together I had never seen her on a Sabbath. Every Monday she was at her post, although laboring under some ex-

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citement, which showed itself in mutterings and a certain wild gesture that I had learned to attach no importance to. There was no fear that I should not have the invisible to myself.

Evening came to close a sultry day with growls of distant thunder and sudden flares of light behind Navesink Hills; the bushes drooped languidly; only the tree-toads were clamorous, and their jubilee was a mournful one on every side. I was sitting by the west window with my head on my breast, and, now that the crisis had come, almost apathetic to the presence itself, when its approach took place. It seemed to stop near my chair, as if it regarded me closely. I had been before in singular predicaments, but it seemed to me this was the most trying. I felt that I must look very pale, but with an affectation of indifference I arose, walked across the room and entered the bed-chamber. In a moment I understood that the unseen had likewise passed the sill and had entered the room; then I slammed the door, locked it, and put the key in my pocket.

Everything had been made ready to cope with a material and not a supernatural being; still it was purely a venture, and at no previous time had there seemed so little hope of success. Nevertheless not a moment was lost in hauling out the net and placing it in position across the room so that it hung straight, filling the space between wall and wall, and ceiling and floor. Then I began to draw it down the room by means of the ropes, and on the axis of the chamber, so that its edges passed smooth-

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ly along ceiling, walls, and floor. The anxious moment was at hand.

All the running gear had to be worked evenly; at the same time every nerve was strained in order to detect the slightest bulge in the upright net, should it come in contact with a tangible body.

Until three quarters of the room had been sifted nothing occurred. Then I saw the edge against the left-hand wall carefully drawn aside; to spring forward and close the opening was the instinctive work of a second. Terror combining with a fierce delight lent me an extraordinary force; I drew with convulsive power on the ropes. Every moment an invisible hand seemed to lift the net at some point, but each attempt was luckily frustrated. At last the movements ceased, and I drew the net flat against the farther wall. With feverish haste my hand travelled over its entire surface; the net was scanned in profile for the impression of a body, but there was none. The game had either escaped or withdrawn into the deep window-seat.

Now came a moment for breath, and for reflection. Again the cynical cloud of doubt folded me in. Dupe of my own morbid imagination, I should stand convicted of monomania in the eyes of any reasonable being who should see my actions. Then it was best, was it not? to tear the net away; or should I deliberately pursue to the utmost a plan begun? Never before had I so clearly felt a dual existence urging to opposite courses of action, as if the body's instinct commanded an advance, while the mind, as-

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sailing the whole proceeding with ridicule, was for giving up the game. But for all that it was a good sign that I began to feel a slight awe at the near possibility of a discovery. For I retreated to the door, unlocked it, and stood irresolute; then returned again to the window, without strength to come to a decision.

But while I pondered, a low, chuckling noise startled me, and Rachel stood by my side, erect and with features full of energy, her dull eyes blazing, and her short straight hair tossed about; in her hand she brandished with exultation a carved rod hung with bright claws and shells, with lappets of fur and hair; and at her and it I gazed with speechless amazement. Had she too gone mad? She took a few steps, as if in a rude dance, and shook the stick, and while her eyes glared into mine she nodded her head to the time.

"Bad spirit!" she muttered. "I have known, I have heard. But this is strong Wabeno."

As she shook the talisman, which clinked and rattled like the toy of a devil, I snatched the medicine stick from her hand and motioned her to the door. Thither she retreated, muttering words of an unknown tongue, and when it closed upon her I flung the stick angrily on the floor. But hope had come, and decision as well, although from a despised quarter; I was resolved to finish the undertaking at all hazards.

The wild flames of the distant storm still lighted everything at intervals with an intensity now greater

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and now less. When the sheet lightning flashed strong, the square cage formed by the wire outside the window-seat and the fish-net within stood out clear against the northern sky. With dilated pupils I began to examine the inclosed cube of air. During one particularly long and vivid flash,—there, in that corner, was there not a heap, a translucent shape, indistinguishable in quality or form? It was enough. Swiftly as wild beasts when they spring, I raised the net, leaped into the window, and grasped toward the corner where I thought I saw the mass.

II.

A THRILL runs through the nerves of an entomologist when he puts his hand on a specimen unknown, undescribed. The hunter trembles when he espies in the thicket the royal hart whose existence has been called a fable. My emotion was all of this, intensified; nearer, perhaps, to the feeling of the elected mortal who has discovered a new continent. For I had discovered a new world.

Had I not cause for exultation? I sat on the window-seat in the alternate light and darkness, with one hand clenched, the other arm curved in the air; my left held fast a slender wrist, while my right was cast about a pair of delicate shoulders; the in-

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visible but tangible figure was crouched away into the smallest space in the corner of the window.

With awe I now realized that my capture was a woman. The delicate moulding of the shoulders and hand was proof enough, but I also felt on my arm a light flood of the silkiest hair. This was a shock to one who had lived apart from women for several years, and had good cause to expect nothing but disaster from their influence. For a moment the impulse was strong to release the captive; luckily reason prevailed, and I tightened my grip on the frail prize, whose frame was shaken with sobs and whose bearing denoted the most abject despair. I gave many timid reassurances by word and hand before the sobs came slower and fear began to loose its hold. As she raised her head I took occasion to pass my right hand lightly over her face. Rendered sensitive by strong excitement, my palm read her features as the blind read the raised print of their books, and of this at least I was sure: the features were human, straight, the eyes large; a full chin and a mouth of unspeakable fineness were divined rather than felt by my flying touch; but I found no trace of tears.

After this I do not know how long we sat. It seemed peaceful and homelike, so that I wondered how it was possible so quickly to forget wonder. A protective warmth toward the creature whose soft breathing came and went slower and slower near my face took a quiet hold on all my senses. At last the gentle head drooped like a tired child's, the deli-

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cate shoulders heaved in a long, peaceful sigh, and to my amazement the strange captive fell asleep in my arms.

So while she slept I sat motionless and thinking, thinking. Who was she? whence and of what order of beings? What was her language; how and how long did she live. Was she really alive in our sense of the word, that is, human with the exception of her transparency? and was her shape like that of ordinary mortals, or did she end in some monstrosity like a mermaid? Such were the questions agitating me when interruption came with a knock at the door. My captive awoke and instinctively started away, at the same time giving a low, articulate cry; but I held her firmly, and called to Rachel to bring me a certain relic of slavery which had been brought from the South. I had profited by the discovery my prisoner's awakening furnished: the invisible, I argued, could articulate, then why should she not understand and speak the language of the people among whom she was found? Accordingly a few rapid questions were put to her, which were unanswered. Then I bethought me of a proof that at any rate she understood my words.

"My dear child, it is mere perverseness in you to refuse an answer. I am sure you understand. You are in my power for good or evil, and if you refuse to speak I must consider you worthy of the following treatment: you shall be made an example to the crowd of the reality of invisible life."

Under cruel treatment of this kind, conjecture

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became certainty; I felt her shudder at the idea, and she laid her hand appealingly on mine. This was all I wanted; speech was now a mere affair of time.

Rachel entered with the rusty handcuffs and handed them to me as if she were conscious and acquiescent in what I did. Not a feature moved, only her eyes shone with inner excitement, in a way I had seen before, while I clasped one link about the unseen wrist.

"Pardon," I whispered, "I do not know you yet. I cannot trust you."

My daily work ceased. To the few inquiries from the great city Rachel had evasive answers ready; they were soon over, and I was left to experience the fascination of a beautiful woman whom I had never seen nor could hope ever to see. To be sure, in certain lights and under certain angles of reflection an indistinct outline of a not large, slender girl, which told of pure contours, could be made out, but this was like following the glassy bells that pulsate far down in the waves of northern seas, or the endeavor to catch the real surface of a mirror. Moreover, the slim captive herself resented any attempt to gain acquaintance with her through the eyes. But by degrees the reserve which had taken the place of her terror melted away before gentle and respectful management, and from her own lips I learned much concerning her marvelous race, before the love which presently overwhelmed us put an end to the cooler interests of reason. Thus she astonished me by speaking of her race as widely

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spread through almost every inhabited land. They never work or educate their children; their food, which is chiefly in liquid form, is taken from the stores laid up by human beings, and such education as they get is picked up by continual contact with mortals. While their passions would seem to be calm, their only laws relate to the observance of secrecy as to their presence on the earth. To secure this end they meet at stated periods and renew their solemn vows, keep a watch upon each other, and disperse again to a settled or wandering life, but one always dependent on the labors of other beings. This alone would explain the paramount importance attaching to secrecy. And as it is impossible to keep always all hint of their existence from human beings, the penalties for disclosure in the latest days have increased to far greater severity than was used in simpler ages; Manmat'ha could not be brought to tell me the fate which awaited her should it be discovered that she had revealed the great secret of her nation, and the very quiet with which she gave me to understand how vast was the danger impressed me more than the most violent words.

It must have been the pain that the thought of any harm befalling her produced in me, which opened my eyes to the strength of my passion. The time for questions had passed, and the days were long only that we might love. One day glided after another unheeded, while we strolled about the neighboring woody hills to catch a broad glimpse of

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the sea from this point, or to examine in that swampy valley the minute wonders of life in plants and insects. At an early stage of our intimacy I had begged to free her wrist from the handcuffs, but she had implored me to continue at least the appearance of slavery, to serve, in case of need, as a partial excuse for violation of her vows. This did not prevent her daily disappearance during the middle hours when the sun was strongest; but these absences only served to give a time for reflection on her beauties and to involve me deeper in the love which now mastered all my thoughts. There was one subject which was long in broaching, but when the necessary courage was summoned, found in Manmat'ha neither objection nor response. She did not comprehend its force. The subject was our marriage.

I had resolved on legal marriage, even if it were necessary to be content with only one witness to the ceremony; that witness could be no one except Rachel. My housekeeper had regarded my preparations and subsequent conduct with a consistent interest and without the least shadow of surprise, and once I remarked that she had caught sight in the twilight of a cup raised without hands; yet no hint fell from her lips to make me feel she was intruding on my affairs. The old blur was in her eyes; the only change in manner was her treatment of me: she regarded me with a kind of awe. And after it had proved abortive to tell her something and not all, because the pleasure of unbosoming

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myself of so much love was too great to restrain, I found Rachel not only full of faith, but even surpassing me. She looked upon Manmat'ha as a supernatural being, and plainly invested me with reflected holiness. Some sort of worship she thought due to Manmat'ha, whilst I, as high priest and mortal consort, was entitled to a share; and indeed it was with some difficulty that I persuaded her not to show her faith by uncouth rites. It was as if her life had been a preparation for some such affair as this, and found her enthusiastic, but not astonished.

Our favorite resort was the couch of pine needles looking south from the hillside where we first met. The same hawk, to me the most blessed of birds, would often sail as before in the middle distance, or night-hawks would cut their strange curves in the evening sky. Far out beyond, sea-gulls, mere specks of white, would wheel and plunge into the bay, and at our backs the woodcock, shy enough in any other presence, would whir fantastically through the woods. All nature was the same, but I was no longer its solitary admirer, for I held in my arms a gentle framework of delight such as no other man before or since has known. She was finer than the finest silk, smoother than the smoothest glass, as if the rays of light, falling on the amazing texture of her skin, found no inequalities from which to reflect.

One evening we had been drawing in long breaths of that delight of which the woods and the great bowl of landscape before us were so full, and I had

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been trying to convince Manmat'ha of the importance of the marriage ceremony. "What," I asked with some trouble in my heart, "what will they do to you in case members of your nation discover your position? I do not mean to ask you what you would not tell me before, but what would be their first step?"

"They would imprison me somewhere under a guard," said Manmat'ha. "It would be many months before a tribunal could be collected together, and still longer before I should be judged. What my fate would be then, it is not well to say."

Had I desired, there is little doubt that I could have compelled Manmat'ha to tell me all she knew, for I had found that my will was much the stronger. But what was curiosity compared with the delight of warming her into responsive love? When I now covered her delicious lips with kisses, she returned the pressure, instead of merely suffering me, as at first, with a mild surprise.

"My first love and my last!" I whispered. "They shall not get you from me while I am alive, if they will only give us warning; but if they rob me of you, I shall follow your trace and rescue you, if it be to the bottom of the sea!"

Manmat'ha laughed a pleased laugh. We both started at an echo, a moment after, which seemed to come from the lower hill, below where we sat. There was no echo possible in that direction.

"Manmat'ha!" I whispered, "tell me quickly! Is some one coming?"

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She sat apparently unable to speak, but trembling and cold to the touch. I had enough presence of mind to take her up and place her on the other side of the pine, on the ground, and throw my coat carelessly over her. As once before I heard passing steps, but now my more practiced ear caught them distinctly. They came lightly up the steep hill and stopped a moment at a little distance from the tree. With eyes fixed on the ocean I waited in an agony of suspense, assuming the most unconscious air of which I was capable. The steps hesitated only a moment; then they passed lower and lower into the upper wood. For half an hour neither of us moved; at last, taking heart, we stole home.

The event set me thinking. If at any moment we were liable to be discovered and separated, the marriage must take place at once. A consumptive hastens his wedding, a wounded tree is quick to bear, and the fright we had experienced taught me how slight was the thread on which my happiness hung; but Manmat'ha was calm with a maidenly content with little, which in my hasty resentment at even a suspicion of opposition to my plan, I was ready to call indifference.

When we entered I could tell by the unfailing sign of Rachel's eye that she was agitated. Later in the evening I heard her chanting in a discordant undertone an ancient formula of her savage ancestors, and therefore it was with some misgivings that I called and informed her that to-night she was to be the sole witness, by touch, if not by sight, of the

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lawful ceremony of wedlock between Manmat'ha and me. She listened in an awestruck silence, and left the room abruptly. As no calling was of any avail, we were compelled to wait her pleasure, which I did with great impatience; and when at last she did return, it was in a shape grotesque almost beyond recognition. Her face and arms were painted white and red in broad bands of coarse pigments; an old embroidered robe fastened over one shoulder, with a close-fitting skirt of buckskin, formed her whole attire. She had put feathers in her hair, and with flaming eyes shook her favorite talisman, the medicine-stick. At one bound she had returned to her ancient state of savagery.

Finding Manmat'ha regarding her with interest, I did not oppose the further proceedings. It struck me that it was not displeasing to my invisible love to receive divine honors even in this wild rite, so I held my peace. She seemed to receive them as her due.

The moon had risen, and gave light to the room through window and open door; flooded by its rays, Rachel moved slowly across the room, uttering in guttural tones a broken chant whose meaning I might have once interpreted, but could not now. On a different occasion I might not have been an entirely unsympathetic observer of the singular sight, but here passion had overcome curiosity. I was an impatient lover. With my arm about Manmat'ha, and filled with earnest emotions, I could not help a feeling of disgust at the monotonous discord

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and frantic gestures of the last of a superstitious race.

"This must end, Manmat'ha," I groaned. "I can wait no longer."

As I spoke, the Indian woman grew ungovernable in wild excitement.

"They are on you! They are here!" she screamed.

I felt Manmat'ha stiffen in my arms with deadly terror. Resistless hands dragged us apart and held me absolutely motionless in spite of the deadly agony which filled me, while Manmat'ha's stifled shriek arose from midway across the room.

"Rachel!" I cried. "For God's sake, Rachel, bar the door!"

My cry roused the woman from a stupor; she sprang to the door. I heard the noise of many light feet, the sound of a blow, a heavy fall; then a deep silence came.

Bounding from the spot to which unseen hands up to that moment had pressed me, I sprang from the room and followed into the night. The earth reeled past me in my swift flight, until I suddenly stopped myself to ask where I was going. Where indeed? As well follow the wind. Wild as was the hope that moved me to return, I hurried back again to the house. Rachel alone, clad in her poor Indian finery, the medicine-stick broken by her side, lay stretched out dead in the moonlight.

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A DARING FICTION.

By H. H. Boyesen.

I.

LEIPSIC is a grim old town with no sentimental associations. Schiller, to be sure, once lived there, but he had a bad time of it, in spite of the slippers and things with which Dora and Minna Stock tried to mollify his existence. The smoke which hangs over the Leipsic chimney-tops is dense, prosaic smoke, which refuses to fashion itself into fairy forms or airy castles in obedience to romantic fancy. Mr. Leonard Grover actually swore (in Latin, of course, for he was too well-mannered to swear in English), that it was the most irritating and pestiferous smoke he had ever encountered since he left his native town of Pittsburg, where a man, by the way, has a fine chance of studying the effects of smoke both upon linen

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and temperament. Mr. Grover was, however, cheerful by nature and refused to be permanently depressed. He was in Leipsic for a practical purpose, and could not afford to indulge in sentimental moods. And yet, in spite of his determination to stick to his science and his laboratory practice, he had unaccountable fits of loneliness, when from sheer despair he went to call upon Professor Bornholm, to whom he had had a letter of introduction and whose family had received him with much cordiality. He would have liked to call upon somebody else occasionally, but the fact was, during the six months he had been at the University he had made no acquaintance outside of his student circle, except the Bornholms. They seemed to like him so much that they refused to share him with anybody else; they even refrained from introducing him to the friends who might happen to call during his visits. Minchen, who was the artistic daughter and made wax-flowers, usually found some way of disposing of him when inconvenient callers of the gentler sex made their appearance. She usually brought a fictitious message from the Professor, who, having entrapped the young man into his study, proceeded to bore him to death with oxalates and chlorides and sulphuric acids.

Röschen, the poetic daughter, whose slippers were a little down at the heel, displaying to advantage the holes in her stockings, was wont to employ her mother as an accomplice and, on some

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pretext or other, lured the American into her garden, where there was the most delightful privacy for sentimental confidences. Gretchen, the youngest daughter, who was obliged to devote herself to domesticity, on account of the inconvenient talents of her sisters, was even at less pains to disguise her designs upon him, but told him frankly that Minchen and Röschen were—well, not at all as nice as they might be.

In one of these bursts of frankness Gretchen also confided to him that Röschen had written to a lady friend in America—a former pupil at the Conservatory who had boarded in the family—and had received from her a complete biography of his humble self, besides a computation of his income and economic prospects. It then required very little ingenuity, on his part, to conjecture why the sisters, in spite of their somewhat ostentatious amiability, frequently appeared to have been at loggerheads just as he entered. He had often heard the word Phœnix pass mysteriously between them, and much as his modesty rebelled, he was forced to the conclusion that he was, himself, the brilliant bird Phœnix, for the possession of which these fair enchantresses were privately contending. He had never before had the audacity to regard himself as a brilliant *parti*, and he had even had a grudge of long standing against Fate for having equipped him so poorly. Measured by the German standard, however, his modest patrimony suggested princely opulence ; and its possessor became con-

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scious of a certain agreeable expansion, peculiar to capitalists. Smile as he might at the smallness of the social conditions which allowed him to play the *rôle* of a Crœsus in the fancy of love-sick maids, he could not deny that he found it a pleasant thing to be the object of such tender rivalry. It seemed to add a cubit to his height and two to his self-esteem. He revelled in the sense of his desirability and watched with amusement the innocent manœuvres by which his fair entertainers check-mated each other, and in their zeal occasionally forgot that he, too, was a rational being, endowed with the faculty of criticism. There was another, however, who made this reflection for them; and that was their mamma—the Frau Professorin. She was becoming alarmed at the discord which prevailed in the family; for, being behind the scenes, as it were, she knew a good deal which Grover could not know, and which perhaps it would not have been well for him to know. Thus she found one day in Minchen's room a drawing in which the American, in the character of Paris, was holding above his head an apple, with the inscription "$5,000 a year;" while three lovely goddesses in scanty attire were stretching out their hands and jumping frantically to reach it. The likenesses were unmistakable and the situation sufficiently pointed to need no commentary. The Frau Professorin was much impressed by it, and her interest, it is needless to say, was enlisted in behalf of the goddesses. She resented the reserved atti-

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tude of the shepherd, and was yet anxious to assist him in arriving at a decision. Minchen, now, with her charming talent for making counterfeit cucumbers in wax and sections of hard-boiled eggs, would be just the wife for a practical man like him. She would invest his home with an artistic flavor which he himself would be capable of appreciating, though powerless to supply. And yet Röschen, with her beautiful verses, her nonchalant toilets and her poetic sympathy for improprieties which, in practice, she was careful to shun, might be even more fitted than her sister to lift and ennoble a sordid American soul. It only remained to be considered whether Gretchen, who could grow enthusiastic over the decline of one cent in the price of butter, might not, after all, be a more kindred nature, and therefore suit him best of all.

The Frau Professorin was deeply engaged in these meditations when the maid handed her a small card, upon which was engraved the name, Leonard Grover. To conceal her agitation she threw a glance into the mirror and gave a few decorative touches to her person, before admitting the visitor. Then she put on her company smile and seated herself in a defensive attitude in the large, leather-covered easy-chair. She gave her hand graciously, without rising, to Grover as he entered.

"I hope your buffalo herds are prospering," she said, after the exchange of a few preliminary civilities.

"My buffalo herds!" exclaimed the young man,

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laughing. Then, as it suddenly struck him that it might be a joke, he continued with zest: "Oh, yes, indeed, thank you; they are doing famously. They made quite a sensation as they were driven through the streets of New York, the other day, on their way from Chicago to the Kansas plains."

"Indeed," replied Mrs. Bornholm effusively; "allow me to congratulate you."

"Thank you," he stammered helplessly.

She had been serious after all.

A minute or two elapsed, during which he did not muster courage to make any further remarks.

"Are the young ladies at home?" he finally essayed, just as the pause was threatening to become awkward.

"The young ladies," repeated the Frau Professorin, beaming with maternal benevolence; "permit me to ask to which of them do you refer in particular?"

"To all three of them," replied the American cheerfully.

"That is very kind of you," she retorted, without, however, the faintest tinge of sarcasm. "I know, even though it is their own mother who says it, that my daughters all deserve the admiration which you so impartially bestow upon them. But the fact is, Mr. Grover—why should I not be perfectly frank and open with you?—the fact is—no man can marry three girls," she finished rather lamely. She evidently lacked courage to make the revelation which she at first contemplated.

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"I am well aware of that, Frau Professorin,' was Grover's somewhat aimless response; "and I assure you," he went on heartily, "that I wouldn't think of such a thing; no, not for all the world."

He had an uncomfortable sensation about his ears, after having made this laudable announcement, and he began to cast about for a pretext for taking his leave. His hostess was, however, not disposed to let him escape so easily.

"The Professor and I," she remarked, blandly, "have observed with much satisfaction your devotion to our daughters. We know you to be a man of character, and we know that it would be far from your intentions to trifle with the feelings of the dear, innocent and unsophisticated creatures. But our German custom, as you may not be aware, is to confine one's courtship to one, and not to scatter one's devotion among too many. In other countries that may be different, but as you have come here to learn German manners, I thought I would call your attention to this, and ask you to tell me, in strict confidence, of course, to which one of my daughters you are paying your addresses."

If the ceiling had tumbled down over his head, Grover could not have been more astonished. It was a fact, he had been almost a daily visitor in the Professor's house; he had very likely, in unguarded moments, in order to practice his imperfect German, made complimentary speeches to the three young ladies, individually and collectively

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and in all probability he had, from a German point of view, given the Frau Professorin the right to talk to him as she did. And yet, to submit readily to the consequences of his rash conduct did not for a moment occur to him. His instinct bade him rather resort to a stratagem, which, as he concluded, the dire necessity would justify.

"Frau Professorin," he began solemnly, "I need scarcely assure you that I feel greatly honored by what you have told me. But the fact is, I am not free. I am engaged."

"Engaged!" cried the Frau Professorin, starting forward in her chair. "Why, then, did you not tell me that?"

"It is a secret engagement."

"A secret engagement! And do your parents know of it?"

"They do not."

"And the lady's name?"

"Miss—Miss—Jones."

Grover had no genius for mendacity and he was already beginning to repent of his daring fiction. But Mrs. Bornholm, suddenly possessed with some luminous idea, proceeded mercilessly in her cross-examination, feeling that her position, as the wronged party, gave her a right to trample upon conventionalities.

"Is this Miss Jones musical?" she queried eagerly.

"Yes," he replied vaguely; "that is, I believe so."

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"You will excuse me," she went on; "but I am naturally much interested in this unknown person, because of my interest in you. Would you mind telling me if she is dark or a blonde?"

"She is dark."

"One thing more; have you written to her recently?"

"No; not very recently."

"And has she ever said anything to you about coming here?"

"Not a word."

The Professorin arose with a triumphant nod and began to pace the floor.

"Miss Jones is a brunette, musical and rich—I suppose she is rich?" she repeated, with an interrogative glance at Grover.

"She is not poor," he responded feebly.

"Good," said his tormentor fiercely, and nodding again with great emphasis, "very good."

Grover began to feel apprehensive that she had taken leave of her senses. The disappointment, the shock to her cherished hopes, had perhaps been too much for her. He arose a little tremblingly and offered her his hand.

"I am your most obedient servant, Frau Professorin," he remarked, bowing deeply, and backing toward the door.

"We shall no doubt have the pleasure of seeing you soon again, Mr. Grover," she observed, eyeing him with curious significance.

"You are very kind." he murmured, and made haste to vanish.

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II.

IT was only three days later that Grover received an invitation to dine at Professor Bornholm's. He had spent the intervening period in meditation concerning Mrs. Bornholm's curious behavior. That she had something on her mind was obvious, and he had no doubt that he would to-day discover what it was. He felt confident that she had been plotting against him and had some dramatic surprise in store for him. As he rang the door-bell he had need of all his *sang froid* to quiet his turbulent heart. He was admitted to the inner sanctuary and was greeted with studious cordiality by the three goddesses. They seemed all agitated and expectant, though they were striving to appear unconcerned. They lounged and chatted as people do in the introductory scene of a play, with hidden reference to some plot which has yet to be disclosed. To all appearances the plot had some connection with the door to the Professor's study, which, contrary to custom, was closed. Minchen repeatedly threw furtive glances at it, and Röschen made her determination not to look at it equally conspicuous; only Gretchen was frankly curious and made no effort to disguise it. A strange sense of the unreality of the whole scene, himself included, crept over the young man; he felt like a

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man in a play who can murder or make love with equal irresponsibility. He was about to indulge in the latter diversion, when suddenly the mysterious door opened, and the Frau Professorin entered with much dramatic *éclat*, leading a lovely dark-eyed young girl by the hand. The eyes of the three goddesses grew as big as saucers, and Röschen pressed her hand to her heart and nearly fainted from excitement.

"Mr. Grover," said the Frau Professorin, making a most elaborate bow, "allow me to present—Miss Jones."

Under ordinary circumstances the introduction to Miss Jones would have been an agreeable incident in Mr. Grover's career, and nothing further. He had met, he did not know how many hundred charming young ladies, several of whom had borne the name of Jones, and he had never been in the least disconcerted. In the present instance, however, he showed but imperfect control of his emotions. A guilty blush sprang to his cheeks, and he groped vainly in his embarrassment for the proper phrase wherewith to express his pleasure at making the lady's acquaintance. Miss Jones, too, somehow, seemed ill at ease, and gazed at him with flaming cheeks and a puzzled, half-anxious look in her eyes. The Frau Professorin, who had probably expected a different denouement, looked disappointed, and the goddesses whispered to each other and tittered.

"You will excuse me for a few moments," said

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the Frau Professorin; "the house needs my attention."

Having learned all that she wished to know, she could afford to be generous. It was plain that the goddesses had displaced Miss Jones in her lover's heart. Hence his annoyance and embarrassment. She could well appreciate his position and in her heart she began to relent toward him. Miss Jones had evidently, under the pretence of studying music, come to Leipsic, to look after her recreant adorer, whose silence had begun to alarm her. The goddesses, too, who had been initiated into the secret, arrived at similar conclusions, and proceeded to dislike the innocent Miss Jones with much vehemence. It was but with reluctance that they heeded their mother's significant scowl and withdrew in her wake.

"Perhaps," said Miss Jones, drawing a breath of relief as the last of the trains vanished in the doorway, "perhaps you would now have the kindness to tell me what this comedy means."

Grover lifted his eyes and gazed at her; she was surpassingly lovely. A pair of frank, dark American eyes, half humorously challenging, put at once his embarrassment to flight, and made him feel a delicious nearness and kinship to their fair possessor.

"Miss Jones," he said, answering promptly the humorous gleam in her eyes, "I shall have to make you a regular confession. I didn't have the remotest idea of your existence."

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"Nor I of yours," she responded quickly; "but what has that got to do with the comedy?"

"Everything. You know, I invented you."

"*You* invented me?"

"Yes, in my dire need, in order to escape from matrimonial persecutions, I invented a *fiancée* in America named Miss Jones. But to be frank, I did not expect you to take me at my word, and turn up over here, in order to regulate my conduct."

"Oh, I see it all," cried Miss Jones, merrily. "You are in the position of a novelist whose heroine suddenly steps out of the book and takes him to task for his fictions."

"But I hope you won't prove a hard task-master," he retorted, gayly. "In consideration of my generosity in making you beautiful and rich, you ought not to betray me."

"Do you mean that I ought to remain your *fiancée*?" she asked, laughing. "I think that is to ask too much of my indulgence."

"You are at liberty to break with me whenever you choose; but until further notice allow the family to suppose that they are right in their conjecture. You need simply say nothing about it. You know our engagement is secret, and we are not expected to show how fond we are of each other."

"That is very fortunate. However," she continued, lightly, as if pleased with the absurdity of the thought, "my fondness for you will probably never demand any very extravagant expression."

"No, but mine may," was his daring reply;

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"therefore, perhaps, as a measure of self-defence, you ought to break with me at once. Make a scene of some sort, revile me; do anything you choose, only so that the eavesdroppers, who are sure to misunderstand everything except vehemence, get a notion that we have been engaged, but are so no more."

Miss Jones, who had seated herself in the sofa-corner, leaned her head in her hand and meditated.

"Do you know," she said, raising the same pretty head abruptly, "your proposition is a very original one? I wonder if a girl was ever before requested to break with a man to whom she had never been engaged. However, Mr. Grover, I am not quite as accommodating as you think. On the whole it suits my purpose very well to be engaged. I have come here for study and have no desire to be courted by students or musicians, of whom there is said to be quite a colony here."

It was now Grover's turn to be amazed. He stared at the sweetly demure and sensible little face in bewilderment.

"Then you mean to—you mean to say——" he stammered.

"Yes, I mean to say," she finished, suppressing the little mischievous gleam in her eye, "that I prefer not to break with you. We will remain engaged."

The young man's countenance fell. He began to look unhappy; perhaps Miss Jones was an unscrupulous adventuress who would turn the joke

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into earnest and sue him for breach of promise after they got home. To be sure, she looked as innocent as an angel, but it is a notorious fact that women are just the most dangerous in that guise. In escaping Scylla he had plunged headlong into Charybdis. He got up with a painful sense of indecision, walked toward the window, and concluded, after a moment's thought, that he could not, as a man of honor, withdraw from a bargain which he had himself proposed. It would be wiser to abide by it, and to trust to his own ingenuity to extricate him at the proper moment.

"Miss Jones," he said, rather ceremoniously, "I thank you for your kindness."

"Not at all," she retorted, carelessly; "it is an arrangement for mutual convenience. But remember," she added, lifting her index finger in playful threat, "that we are extremely well-bred and undemonstrative."

III.

THE goddesses found it a harder task than they had anticipated to hate Miss Jones. Scarcely twenty-four hours had passed before Gretchen was at her feet, and vowed that she was the German equivalent for a "perfect darling." In return Miss Jones taught her how to make quince jelly,

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flavored with the kernels in the stones. Two days sufficed to conciliate Röschen ; and when she discovered that Miss Jones did not positively and unequivocally condemn the homicidal eccentricities of Lucrezia Borgia, she declared with noble enthusiasm that Miss Jones was "a grand soul." As for Minchen, she held out heroically against Miss Jones's blandishments ; but at the end of a week she too succumbed. Miss Jones had complimented her in imperfect German, but with the sweetest of accents, on her wax flowers, and had drawn new designs for her, full of animation and dash. Presently they said "thou" to each other, and Miss Jones, who had been Lulu at home, was metamorphosed into Luischen. Even the Frau Professorin, who at first had put her down as an artful little minx, began to forget her grudge against her. The Professor found it a positive hardship that he was not at liberty to kiss her. But the most amusing thing of the whole affair was that they all became her partisans against her recreant lover, Grover, who had trifled so wantonly with her feelings. They made cautious overtures to condole with her, but, in spite of the tenderest sympathy, found her singularly uncommunicative on this subject. Now the goddesses, who in external charm did not profess to compete with her, had in the first flush of their enthusiasm been quite disposed to sacrifice themselves upon the altar of their devotion ; but, although they could have forgiven any other form of maltreatment, Lulu's apparent

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distrust of them wounded them deeply. They had looked forward to delicious nocturnal confidences, when, half disrobed, each should visit the other's boudoir and discuss the fascinating topic from all possible and impossible points of view. That Lulu had proved impervious to all hints of this nature was a slight which could not be pardoned, at least not without due penance on her part. Moreover, to add to their mortification, there seemed daily to be less occasion for sympathy. Lulu was winning Mr. Grover back to his allegiance slowly but surely. He called, now, almost every afternoon, took long walks with her through the Rosenthal, and barring a certain Anglo-Saxon reserve (which in Germany is thought perfectly incomprehensible) behaved in every way as an engaged man should. It was scarcely to be wondered at that the goddesses found such an exhibition of devotion a little bit irritating, and voted Lulu, the happy and victorious, as odious as Lulu, the abandoned, the secretly-grieving, had been lovely and interesting. It was especially Röschen, the admirer of daring unconventionality, who took it into her head that she had been wronged and deceived by the false and heartless Lulu, and she swore—that is to say, she vowed solemnly—that she should yet get even with that sly and demure little arch-fiend. The coveted opportunity did not, however, present itself as soon as her impatience demanded, and while the winter dragged along slowly, alternating delightfully between

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frozen mud and liquid mud, Grover's devotion went on steadily deepening, until Miss Jones even interfered with his laboratory practice, mixed herself up in his chemicals, and on one occasion precipitated an explosion which singed his whiskers and damaged his complexion for a month to come. From this experience he drew the wise deduction that love and chemistry are antagonistic forces, and therefore irreconcilable; but as he could not persuade himself to give up either, it occurred to him to effect a compromise. He would, as far as possible, devote the forenoons to chemistry and the afternoons to love—that is to say, he would devote himself to Miss Jones, and try gently to lure her on to the forbidden topic.

I believe I have said before that demonstrations of affection were strictly prohibited; but I have not remarked that in the by-laws subsequently drafted by Miss Jones for the regulation of their abnormal relation, oral references to the same interesting topic were likewise forbidden. When Miss Jones had her own way, she usually talked music, and talked intelligently and well. She seemed to find a kind of humorous satisfaction in confining her adorer strictly to practical topics and in ignoring sentimental allusions. If he rebelled against this sort of maltreatment, and became silent and moody, she aggravated the offence by not appearing to notice it. She would then find employment in separating little boys who fought in the street, or in eliciting confidences from old apple-women.

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There was something almost fiercely virginal about her, something bordering upon enthusiasm in the way she repelled an attempted incursion upon the forbidden ground. And withal she was so tender and sympathetic toward all mankind, that her wilful obtuseness on the subject of love bore to him the appearance of wanton cruelty. It did not occur to him that she might be acting in self-defence, fearing to give the slightest rein to a feeling which might, on very slight provocation, run away with her. She was the kind of girl which one does not readily think of in connection with the tender passion; and whose love, perhaps, for this very reason, seems so ineffably precious to him who is trying to win it.

"Did it ever occur to you," he said to her one day, as they were walking together under the leafless arches of the Rosenthal, "that when God saw all that He had made, and 'behold it was very good,' He left woman out?"

"No, I didn't know it," she said, with a gleam of amusement.

"Nevertheless, it is so," he went on. "When He said it was all very good, woman was not yet created. After she was made, God said nothing at all."

"That was because she was so nice that she needed no commendation," rejoined Miss Jones promptly.

"For all that, history shows that she has made a deal of mischief in the world," said Grover lugu-

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briously ; he was feeling piqued and abused at her want of responsiveness to his undisguised admiration.

"History was written by men," was Miss Jones's response.

"But made by women," ejaculated Grover, eager to hold his own in the tilt.

"As you like. I don't think the man was far wrong who said that there was a woman at the bottom of every important event."

"You talk like a book."

"I only wish I had the wit to make one. I would make you men stare if I published my version of the world's history."

"You can do that better without the wit," he retorted recklessly ; then, seeing a little cloud, as of pained surprise, pass over her countenance, he made a motion to seize her hand, but succeeded, instead, in knocking her parasol into the middle of the road. The necessity of recovering it cooled for the moment the passion which had threatened to overmaster him.

"Pardon me," he murmured penitently, as he was again at her side. "I did not mean to hurt your feelings ; but the fact is, I am on such a constant strain to keep my sentiment below the boiling point that I lose my self-control and say things the effect of which I only see after I have said them."

"Don't apologize, please," she said, hurrying on so rapidly that he could only with difficulty

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keep pace with her; then as a perfect godsend, there crossed her line of vision two small boys who were pulling each other's hair and pummelling each other lustily.

"You naughty boy," she ejaculated with much animation, seizing the bigger one by the arm and forcing him to face her, "why do you strike that poor little fellow?"

"He mixes himself up in my affairs," responded the culprit, defiantly; then discovering a considerable tuft of his antagonist's hair in his hand, he turned about shamefaced and tried to dispose of it, unperceived. Miss Jones, however (though she was not without sympathy for any one whose affairs were becoming mixed), dexterously caught the descending tuft on the point of her parasol and held it up as proof of his guilt. "What a dreadful little boy you are," she said, reprovingly.

"But I will pummel Anton again," retorted the dreadful little boy, "if he plays 'engaged' with Tilly Heitmann."

"Plays 'engaged!' Ah, then I beg your pardon," said Miss Jones, airily, with a sly little glance at her companion. "Little boys who play engaged deserve to be pummelled."

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IV.

If Prince Bismarck or his big dog had come to town, there could not have been more excitement in the Bornholm family. The three young ladies sat upon a bed, with their hair done up in curl papers, and looked intense. They had hatched a plot of revenge which was worthy of three blonde heads done up in curl-paper. It had been ascertained that Mr. Grover had invited Miss Jones to the artists' carnival, and that Miss Jones had accepted the invitation. He had, moreover, asked the Frau Professorin to chaperone Miss Jones for the occasion, and the Frau Professorin, who was as fond of excitement as a girl, did not have the strength of mind to show him that she resented the slight he had put upon her daughters. She tried to make the daughters believe, of course, that she had ; and they would undoubtedly have taken her word for it, if they hadn't been listening at the key-hole. When taken to task, the Frau Professorin was in such an indulgent mood that she would readily have consented to anything ; and when Röschen proposed that she, too, should go to the masquerade and in exactly the same costume as Miss Jones, her mother only interposed a vague demurrer which was easily overridden. The interesting complications which might arise, if Grover should mis-

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take one Daughter of the Rhine for the other, stimulated her romantic fancy and made her eager as a girl to have the plot carried into effect. What was to be accomplished by it, she did not trouble herself to define; it only gave her a kind of confused satisfaction to think that she was mystifying somebody who had for a long time been mystifying her. Röschen was exactly of Miss Jones's height and their figures closely resembled each other. So when they were masked a microscope would be required to tell them apart.

Röschen, who was full of blissful anticipations, went about during the day embracing people promiscuously from sheer excess of happiness. She could almost have embraced Grover, foe though he was, for having afforded her such a glorious opportunity for playing a trick on him. Her adventurous spirit had long yearned for some monumental enterprise, and this had somehow a mysterious atmosphere about it which made it doubly attractive to the admirer of Lucrezia Borgia. As for Miss Jones, she was unsuspicious as a new-born babe, which circumstance heightened the joy of the conspirators, thrilling them with sensations of deep and delightful villainy.

The week before Lent came at last and the reign of Prince Carnival was proclaimed through the streets by medieval heralds in gorgeous attire. The procession was watched from windows and balconies, and at last came the evening with its alluring festivities, including the *bal masque*. The

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Frau Professorin, as she flitted from Miss Jones's boudoir to that of her daughter, taking notes of the former's costume for the benefit of the latter, felt like an arch conspirator upon whose coolness and address the fate of empires hung. Miss Jones had had her costumes designed by an expert costumer, and the difficulty was to make Röschen's home-made finery as trim and dazzling as the products of professional skill. This feat was, however, happily accomplished, thanks to Minchen's artistic taste and Gretchen's nimble fingers. The Frau Professorin then slipped with a sigh of relief into her black domino and took her seat at Miss Jones's side in the carriage. Grover, in the guise of King Gunther in the Nibelungen Lay, sat opposite, arrayed in a splendid helmet and scarlet cloak, endeavoring to make his legs as unobtrusive as possible. The drive to the Schützenhaus was not long, and Miss Jones, muffled up to her very eyes, hopped out of the carriage as lightly as Cinderella from her metamorphosed cucumber. The Frau Professorin, likewise muffled, allowed Grover to assist her up the stairs, and was conducted by him to the door of the dressing-room, where there stood a female Cerberus whose business it was to keep away male intruders. When King Gunther, after doing sentinel duty for half an hour, again caught sight of the swan-maiden, the daughter of Father Rhine, she was so surpassingly lovely that he forgot to inquire for her chaperone. The chaperone, therefore, without difficulty, effected a clandestine retreat,

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found her way to a carriage and drove home as fast as the spavined droschke horse would convey her. Twenty minutes later she slipped into the dressing-room at the Schützenhaus, accompanied by a second daughter of Father Rhine, whom that worthy parent himself could scarcely have told from her lately-arrived sister.

The three floors of the enormous house represented the upper, the middle, and the lower world.

The first floor was submarine and subterranean; cool, dimly-illuminated grottoes, some in basaltic, columnar rock, some in emerald-glowing stalactite, invited all the fantastic creatures of the sea, both fabled and real, who were promenading about on the floor of the deep, to a sweet, life-long siesta in their softly-gleaming recesses. On the second floor luxuriant equatorial palm-groves grew in startling proximity to the snow-laden pines of the North, and a heterogeneous assembly of all nations and ages poured through the resplendent avenues, chatting and playing pranks on each other with Teutonic good humor.

"Let us go to Olympus," said King Gunther, who was drifting with his snow-maiden through the motley throng. "I may never have another chance of getting there," he added jocosely.

"I am afraid I should not feel at home there," answered the daughter of the Rhine; "you know I belong properly to the lower regions."

"Then let us go to the lower regions," retorted the king, gayly. "You needn't go in search of

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the Elysian Fields; you carry them with you wherever you go."

"Beware, your Majesty," murmured the water-nymph, threateningly. "You are defying Fate. Creatures of my kind are dangerous to trifle with."

"It is you who are trifling, not I," he burst forth; "with me the joke has long ago become serious."

He felt her arm trembling where it touched his; under the black fringe of her mask he saw her lips quiver, and her eyes shone with a strange, moist radiance. The crowd of gay maskers surged about them and the music whirled away over their heads unheeded, and broke in showers of rippling sound.

"Listen to me," he whispered boldly, stooping to her level—but in the same moment a heavy hand was laid upon his neck and a burly, gray-bearded Jupiter stood before him with a great train of Olympian attendants.

"I love the daughters of this green earth," said the king of the gods; "or I should say the green daughters of this black earth," he corrected himself, touching with a caressing hand the green sea-weeds of the swan maiden's drapery.

"Excuse me, Father Jupiter," Grover began, knowing well, in spite of his chagrin, that pranks of this kind were perfectly legitimate; "you mix up the mythologies. This is not a classic nymph, but a Northern swan-maiden."

"By my Olympian beard," cried Jupiter, "that shows your barbaric taste, if you do not pronounce her classic."

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"I must insist," Grover replied, "that to your pagan majesty a creature of Northern fable has no existence."

"Then by my Ambrosian locks we will give her existence," quoth the father of gods and men. "Mercury, my son," he cried, pointing with his sceptre to a graceful youth with winged heels and cap, "change me quickly this maiden into something classic, but don't change her too much or you will spoil a divine masterpiece."

Mercury, with winged speed, came forward, waved his wand over the swan-maiden's head, when behold! she vanished.

"Why, your magic is too potent, you rascal," ejaculated Jupiter. "I didn't tell you to make her invisible."

He flourished his pasteboard sceptre in mock wrath above his head, dealt Mercury a resounding blow on the head, then marched on, followed by his immortal family and a jovial throng of leaf-crowned Bacchantes. Grover remained standing in the middle of the floor, hoping that, as the crowd dispersed, Miss Jones would naturally again seek him. But Miss Jones had apparently no such intention. She persistently remained invisible. At last, thinking that she had meant her allusion to the lower regions as a hint, he made his way to the head of the stairs and descended, not without difficulty, to the first floor. The dancing had commenced above and the multitude of scaly monsters who had haunted the deep, were lured by the airs

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of Strauss up into the abodes of the daylight. The submarine world was almost deserted (except by a huge lobster and a shark, who were drinking lemonade) when Grover entered upon his quest for the vanished water-nymph. He investigated two or three grottoes, with no result except to tear his cloak on an exposed nail and knock a hole in his helmet. He was just about to resort to a classical imprecation, when the necessity for it was suddenly dissipated. There stood the daughter of Rhine, wonderful to behold, in sweet converse with her chaperone, the black domino. The young man lost no time in making the ladies aware of his presence.

"I hope you are enjoying yourself, Frau Professorin," he said, as he offered his arm, as a matter of course, to the swan-maiden.

"Oh, yes, I thank you. It takes very little to amuse an old woman like me," she answered, pleasantly. "The music is good and the masks are very entertaining."

"Is there anything I can do for you?" he queried politely, hoping from the bottom of his heart that she would say no.

"Don't you bother about me," was her amiable reply; "I will take care of myself. I only came to see you young people enjoy yourselves."

He had evidently been unjust to the Frau Professorin, he reflected. She was a very charming old lady. He conceived a sudden affection for her. In a very blissful mood he strolled away under the

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great festoons of depending sea-weeds, giving now and then a little casual pat to the hand which lightly rested on his arm. By some chance they found themselves in a deserted stalactite cave, where the gas-jets gleamed softly from within emerald cones of glass and spread a strange magic glamour under the pendent arches.

"Let us sit down," said Grover; and the swan-maiden, whose agitation probably forbade her to speak, silently accepted the invitation. "What a transformation love works in a woman," he reflected ecstatically; "who would recognize in this sweet, docile creature the rebellious and headstrong girl of three months ago? I have long wished to tell you," he continued aloud, seizing her hand and drawing her close up to him, "that my life would be barren as a desert without you. You have taught me by your sweet reserve, and your self-respecting coolness, first to esteem you highly, then to admire and at last to love you. Do not think even now that I take your consent for granted. I only hope that love, as strong and deep as mine, cannot fail to find some response. It is imperious, all-conquering; it fears no more resistance."

There was obviously no occasion for such impassioned rhetoric. The swan-maiden had not the faintest idea of offering resistance. She slipped with a soft and charming suppleness into his embrace and received his ecstatic kisses without a murmur of protest. It was not until he made a movement to tear off her mask (whose depending

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fringe was a great inconvenience) that she suddenly recovered her senses: with a startled cry she stayed his hand, cast a shy glance about her, jumped up and ran as fast as her feet could carry her. If she had been a real fairy, she could not have made a more rapid and unexpected exit. Grover was utterly dumbfounded. He thought of the old legends about knights who had been loved by mermaids whose kiss was death and their embrace eternal damnation. An uncanny feeling crept over him. But a cheerful second thought soon came to comfort him. He had heard from the best authorities that women were enigmatical and incalculable creatures who were most apt to do what was least expected of them. They had a perfect encyclopedia of eccentricities, if the novelists were to be trusted, and it was not to be expected that his brief acquaintance with the sex should have sufficed to master it. This was a profitable train of thought and one well worth pursuing. Therefore, instead of pursuing his nymph, he leaned back against the wall and pondered.

The nymph, in the meanwhile, after a hurried search below, ran to the dressing-room, where she flung herself weeping into the arms of the black domino.

"What in Heaven's name is the matter, child?" inquired the latter. "Was he rude to you?"

"Not at all," sobbed the nymph; "no-o-ot a-a-at all. Quite the co-o-on-tra-ry."

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"What then are you crying for?" asked the domino sympathetically.

"He kissed me, mother; he kissed me," answered the nymph, weeping.

"You ought not to have allowed him to do that," said the Frau Professorin, with mild reproach.

"How could I help it, mother? He talked so beautifully to me. He proposed to me. And I forgot that I was Miss Jones. I was only myself—and—"

A second flood of tears made the rest unintelligible.

"Are you sure he proposed to you, child?" queried the mother, after a pause.

"Quite sure, mother."

"But then he must have known you. For why should he propose to Miss Jones, to whom he is already engaged?"

"That is what makes me so unhappy, mother, for now I shall never know whether I am engaged to him or not."

"Leave that to me, child. I'll find out."

V.

THE next day Grover had an accident, which cost him upward of $200. He mixed something or other, which made a terrific racket and smashed no end of

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retorts and bottles. When he entered the laboratory again after having trimmed off the scorched fringe of his whiskers, he found a big card nailed over his place, with the following inscription: "Smoking and being in love in this laboratory is strictly forbidden." The prohibition in regard to smoking was in print; the rest was interpolated with a paint-brush. Grover looked around wrathfully upon the twenty or thirty backs which reared themselves against shelves of many-colored bottles; they bore all an expression of unconscious innocence.

The hour was approaching when he might without impropriety call upon his *fiancée*. His toilet, however, needed some attention, after his recent experiment with explosives; and he hastened to his rooms to make himself presentable. On the table he found a letter, addressed in the usual high-shouldered characters of American girls. It read as follows:

MY DEAR MR. GROVER: Our engagement for mutual convenience being no longer convenient, I grant your request and hereby break it. I would have done so when you first asked me, only I enjoyed your embarrassment, and had, moreover, a desire to punish you for the liberty you took with a lady whom you had not seen until that moment. I trust we shall remain good friends. If you desire a scene of some sort, in order to advertise our changed relations to the household, you may call upon me this afternoon at three. You will understand that I do this only to save explanations. A quarrel, you know, ends everything; is so intelligible and

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satisfactory; precludes questions and discourages curiosity. Accordingly, my dear sir, I will quarrel with you at 3:15 P.M., promptly, and remain,

Sincerely your friend,

LOUISE JONES.

LEIPSIC, March 12, 187–.

Grover read this enigmatical epistle eleven times without deriving the slightest clue to its meaning. He read it aloud and he read it in silence, he analyzed, scrutinized and apostrophized it, but without avail. That feminine caprice could reach such alarming dimensions he had never dreamed. That she should want to break with him the morning after she had become really engaged to him could be accounted for by a variety of reasons. But that she should write him a cool and semi-humorous letter, showing no more agitation than one of Bret Harte's heroes who is about to be hanged—that certainly capped the climax of eccentric behavior. And that, after her passionate protests! But hold on! What did she say yesterday that was so passionate? Curiously enough, he could not remember a word of what she had said. It began slowly to dawn upon him that, during the memorable scene, he had himself done all the talking. She had not uttered a syllable. It was odd, but probably not without precedent. Well, if she wanted her quarrel, she should have it promptly on the hour, and with *éclat*.

At 3:15 o'clock he rang the Professor's door-bell, and was ushered into the drawing-room, where Miss Jones stood smiling sweetly upon him.

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"I hope you didn't misunderstand my note," she said, seeing the troubled look in his eyes.

"Misunderstand it!" he ejaculated, with ill-suppressed indignation; "if I had arrived as far as misunderstanding it, I should have had respect for my intellect. I doubt if the seven sages could have interpreted it."

"It wasn't necessary that they should," said Miss Jones imperturbably.

"But suppose they had made love to you?" he began, argumentatively.

"The seven sages *never* made love to me," remarked Miss Jones, perversely.

"But suppose you had kissed them?"

"I *never* kissed them!"

Miss Jones repelled this insinuation with indignant emphasis.

"It is utterly useless to argue with you," he said, pacing the floor in agitation.

"Then I would not try."

"You are cruel, vain, and heartless."

"If those qualities were contagious, I should know where I got them."

"You mean yesterday, when you kissed me!"

"I must decline to listen to such language. You will have the kindness to remember Mr. Grover, that from this moment our acquaintance is at an end."

Miss Jones arose with flaming cheeks and eyes in which the unseen tears trembled; she made Mr. Grover a sweeping courtesy and moved with a good deal of superfluous stateliness toward the door. He

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returned her salute, though with much less dignity; then rushed forward to hold her back, but with an impatient gesture she shook off his grasp and hurried out.

"We met to quarrel in jest, and we did it in earnest," he reflected grimly, as he picked up his hat and opened the door. There was a sudden, agitated rustle of skirts in the hall, and he was just in time to see Röschen's back hair vanish into the dining-room.

VI.

BEING engaged is said to be a very delightful thing. You fulfill a pleasant duty to society and one no less pleasant to yourself. In Germany particularly, the engaged state is one of great honor. You advertise the important event in the newspapers, above the marriages and births; you walk abroad with your *fiancée* arm-in-arm (which is an inestimable privilege); you introduce her with much ceremony to your uncles and cousins and aunts; you receive congratulations—in short, you become a sort of public character, until some one else goes and follows your illustrious example. Then you become an old story and lapse into insignificance.

It was this ravishing vision of the engaged state,

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with its attendant festivities, which had excited Röschen's imagination. She had seen herself a hundred times on Grover's arm, making the round of her whole circle of acquaintance, and introducing him triumphantly to her pet enemies. He would, of course, at a hint from her, be gracious to those who had been kind to her, and politely snub those who had been disagreeable to her. There was a day of reckoning coming for those who had made sport of Röschen's verses, a day of glorious revenge. But the trouble now was, that, although Röschen looked upon herself as engaged, and respected herself accordingly, she did not have the courage to claim her *fiancé*. She was, as it were, anonymously engaged. The uncertainty of the thing tortured her. She was more than once tempted to sit down and write to Mr. Grover, telling him that it was she to whom he was engaged; but the thought that he might, in that case, divine her plot always deterred her. That he had quarrelled with Miss Jones hardly simplified the matter; for a lover's quarrel of that sort is never such a serious affair as the parties involved are apt to think. If only Miss Jones would have the inspiration to go to Berlin or to Stuttgart, or to Halifax, the road to Grover's affections would be comparatively plain sailing. But Miss Jones, in spite of the most pointed hints regarding the superior musical advantages of other cities, persisted in remaining where she was. She practiced with an odious regularity and indefatigable zeal, which knew neither weariness

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nor discouragement. She did not grow perceptibly thinner, nor did her complexion show the ravages of sorrow. It was unanimously resolved by the ladies of the household that she was a cold and heartless monster. If it hadn't been for the fact that she paid forty dollars a month (which was put aside for dowries), she would have been told to pack her trunk.

This phase of feeling lasted about three weeks. Then the unfailing charm of Miss Jones's affability began once more to assert itself. Röschen was seized with a sudden desire to kiss her; for she looked so irresistibly cool and lovely as she sat at the breakfast-table sipping her coffee, and propounding her neat little German sentences, which were always correct, though with a faint flavor of "Otto." Röschen felt positive that those calm, intelligent eyes of Miss Jones's read them all like a book; and instead of being indignant at such presumption, Röschen grew repentant. She yearned to fling herself at Miss Jones's feet and confess all her wickedness. She would wear white, with a single red rose in her bosom like *La Sonnambula*. When she thought of all the heroines of history and romance who had renounced the men they loved, she too felt that she could rise to a like heroism in renouncing the man she didn't love; for she did not, for one moment, deceive herself in regard to her sentiment for Grover. It was the engaged state she had been in love with; and he was merely a lay figure, convenient for the occasion—a puppet with whom she

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enacted the scenes appropriate to the engaged condition.

She was yet pondering the problem, but had not yet nerved herself for action, when one day she was startled at the sound of Grover's voice in the hall. He handed his card to the girl and inquired for the Frau Professorin. There was a council of war on the spot, and the Frau Professorin sent word that she was "not at home." Grover then asked permission to see "the young ladies." It was a very disappointing message; the plural number was especially disheartening. The sisters, however, were equal to the occasion. Minchen and Gretchen nobly declared that they were "out." Accordingly there was nothing to do, except for Röschen to receive the visitor. She donned her white muslin, stuck a Jacqueminot rose in her bosom, and entered the drawing-room with a quaking heart. The young man shook hands with her without the faintest trace of embarrassment, and begged her to have the kindness to present his "adieux" to the family, as he had concluded to continue his studies in Berlin.

"And you are going to leave Leipsic!" she exclaimed, in astonishment.

"Naturally," he replied: "I leave to-night."

Röschen's heart thumped as if it meant to work its way out through her ribs.

"Now or never!" it said, with an unmistakable plainness; "now or never!"

The Jacqueminot rose fell to the ground; Grover

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stooped to pick it up. Had he only said: "May I keep this as a souvenir of our friendship,'' or something of that sort, she would at once have summoned courage to make her confession. But, instead of that, he gravely handed her back the rose and remarked that he was under great obligation to her father and mother for their kindness to him during his stay in the city. She knew of no appropriate reply to this observation until his silence forced her to invent one. "You have given us no opportunity of late to be either kind or unkind to you," she said, with a blush, which made her feel hot all over.

"The circumstances are at fault, not I," he answered, and got up to take his leave.

"Pardon me," she said, grasping his hand with a desperate clutch; "I think I heard mother come in. I'll be back in one moment."

Several minutes elapsed, however, but neither Röschen nor the Frau Professorin appeared. Then a sudden sound of sobs was heard in the next room, and Grover, fearing that some one was in distress, hastily opened the door. There stood Miss Jones, grave and benign, stooping over the weeping Röschen, who was dramatically embracing her knees.

"Oh, it was I—it was I who made trouble between you," sobbed the girl, flinging back her head and gazing imploringly up into Miss Jones's face. "You are so good and noble, Louise, can you ever forgive me? Oh, I wish you would kill me, so that I never could do you any harm again."

"That won't be necessary, my dear," said Miss

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Jones, soothingly, stroking the penitent's hair and kissing her forehead; then, catching sight of Grover, she instantly recovered her dignity and disengaged herself from Röschen's embrace. The latter, with a wildly despairing glance at the young man, sprang up and rushed out of the room.

Miss Jones and Grover stood face to face. The reverberation of Röschen's excitement seemed to linger in the room, and they waited for it to pass away before speaking.

"I came to bid you good-bye," he said at last; it did not occur to him that he had not come for that purpose.

"I am happy to have a chance to—to—beg your pardon," replied Miss Jones, with a heroic determination to crucify her pride. "I was harsh and unjust to you. Röschen has told me all."

"I wish she would tell *me* all. I am as much in the dark as ever."

"The girl to—to—whom you proposed in the grotto—was—was—not I," she faltered, grasping the door-knob for support, and gazing into the mirror with a vain hope to hide her blushes.

He drew a long sigh of relief. That intelligence simplified existence enormously. He had had a hopeless feeling, of late, that life was too complex an affair for him to grapple with. Now, as by a flash. order was restored in his chaotic universe. He stood gazing in rapture at Miss Jones's blushing face, which seemed angelic in its purity and its dignified maidenhood. That there dwelt a sweet young soul

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behind those blameless features he felt blissfully convinced.

"Miss Jones," he began, "if Miss Röschen has confessed to you, you know what I would have liked to say to you—that night in the grotto. Now, what would you have answered me?"

A little ray of mirth stole over the girl's face, and vanished again.

"I should have said—no," she remarked smilingly.

The orderly universe again tumbled into chaos. She was the veritable Sphinx, and he not the Œdipus to read her riddle.

"Then I will bid you good-bye," he managed to stammer, extending an unwilling hand and again withdrawing it.

"Good-bye, Mr. Grover," she said with heartless cheerfulness; "I hope it is not forever."

"I am afraid it is," he murmured sadly.

He took two steps toward the door, and laid his hand on the knob.

"Oh, by the way," ejaculated the girl, with a sudden alarm in her voice; "that question you would have asked me in the grotto—why don't you ask it now?"

"You said you would say no."

He had turned about in unutterable astonishment.

"I didn't say that," she retorted gravely.

"What did you say then?"

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"That I should have said No *in the grotto.*"

The scene which followed was of a strictly private and confidential character; I fear Miss Jones would take me to task if I divulged it.

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THE STORY OF TWO LIVES.

By Julia Schayer.

THE early darkness of a moonless winter night had fallen, nowhere more darkly and coldly than upon a certain small western town, whose houses were huddled together in the valley as if for mutual protection against the fierce winds sweeping through the trackless forests which surrounded it. Here and there the cheerful glow of lamp or fire shone from some uncurtained window, most brightly from the windows of the stores and saloons that occupied the centre of the town, whence issued also fitful sounds of talk and laughter. Otherwise the darkness was complete.

On the outskirts of the town, just at the foot of a steep hill, stood a cottage somewhat more pretentiously built than the others, and surrounded by something of a lawn, laid out with flower-beds and shrubbery, now almost buried in deep drifts of

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snow. From one window of this cottage, too, a most heartsome glow streamed out over the snow from a lamp placed, as could be seen, with loving intent upon the window-ledge, and out of the darkness there presently emerged the figure of a man, making his way up the foot-path toward the house, his feet ringing sharply against the hard-trodden snow.

Along one side of the house—planted without doubt to break the force of the northern gales—extended a grove of pines and firs, looking now, in the darkness, like the advance guard of a mighty host with banners slowly waving, and strange instruments giving forth weird, unearthly harmonies. As the man passed this spot he slackened his steps once or twice, and seemed to listen for some sound that had caught his ear, and again, when his foot was already on the lower step of the flight leading to the door, he stopped suddenly, his face turned toward the sombre wall of trees.

The light of the lamp illumined their slender trunks and lower boughs, leaving their tops wrapped in utter darkness. It also threw into strong relief the powerful figure of the man, and projected his shadow, huge, wavering and grotesque, across the intervening space. For an instant another shadow seemed to start forward from the mysterious recesses of the pines as if to meet this one, only to fall back and be gathered into the blackness beyond.

The man shrugged his broad shoulders, and,

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turning, entered the house. A fair, slender woman rose from her seat by the open fire, and went to him.

"Oh! Jamie," she said, "here you are, at last! I'm so glad! I was so afraid something had happened?"

The man threw off his heavy coat with a good-humored laugh.

"Were you afraid I might blow away?" he asked, straightening his large figure. "Why are you always imagining vain things, like a foolish little wifie? I'm big enough to take care of myself, eh, lassie?"

The little wife answered with a smile of loving admiration.

"Come," she said, "supper has been ready a long time, and Bab asleep this half-hour."

She took the lamp from the window and set it on the table, where it shone full on her husband's face. It was a fine, thoroughly English face, with high forehead, brilliant blue eyes, and thick curling hair and beard of a bright golden-brown. A handsome face, and a strong one, but for a womanish fulness of the ruddy lips, and a slight lack of firmness about the chin, which was concealed, however, by the luxuriant beard. It was a face which could, and habitually did, radiate amiability, good cheer, and intelligence, but which had a way of settling at times into stern and melancholy lines, curiously belying his assured carriage, and the sonorous ring of his ready laugh.

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Very good to look at was James Dixon, and, as his townsmen unanimously admitted, in spite of his English birth, a good citizen, a shrewd politician, a generous neighbor, and, though at times a little reticent and abstracted, a companionable fellow altogether.

Even now, as he sat at his own table, one might have detected a kind of alertness in his eyes, as of a man ever on his guard, and what seemed almost a studied avoidance of his wife's soft, persistent gaze, as she sat opposite him.

"Sh! What was that?" she suddenly exclaimed. There had been a faint sound outside the window. It had ceased now.

"It was nothing, Bab!" said her husband. "How nervous you are!"

Even as he spoke the sound was repeated, and he himself started now.

"I'm catching your nervousness, Bab," he said, with a short laugh. "The wind is the very deuce to-night."

At that moment a little girl in her nightgown ran out from the adjoining room, and with a gleeful cry sprang into his arms, her long yellow hair spreading itself over his shoulder.

"You see, dear old papa, Bab *wasn't* asleep!" she cried, covering his face with kisses.

"And why *isn't* Bab asleep?" her father said, with an assumption of sternness.

"Because she *can't* sleep. The wind makes such a noise in the pines, and the icicles keep falling off

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the eaves, and make such a pretty tinkling on the snow. Do you hear it? Hark!"

"The wind increases fearfully," said the wife, going to the window and drawing the shade. "It is a bitter night."

"Bad enough for anybody to be out in," said Dixon, with the comfortable air of one safely housed. He moved his chair to the fire, and began fondling and playing with the pretty child on his knee. Her little face, however, had grown suddenly grave.

"What is it, pussy?" asked her father; "it looks so serious all at once."

"I was thinking," said the child, slowly; "I was wondering where the poor old man I saw up on the hill to-day would sleep to-night. Such a poor, poor man, so old and sick and ragged."

"Bless the chick! What is she talking about now?"

"Some man she saw to-day when she was on the hill coasting with the others," the mother said. "Some tramp, I suppose."

"I have not heard of any in town," said Dixon, with sudden thoughtfulness. "It isn't the season for tramps. Oh!" he added, carelessly, as the child continued to look in his face, "some worthless old vagabond, I suppose, dearie. Don't fret your little heart about him. He'll find a warm nest in somebody's hay-mow, no doubt." But little Bab shook her head.

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"I don't think he was bad," she said, softly, "only very sick and sorry. He asked me my name, and when I told him he laughed out so queer! And then I showed him our house, and told him maybe you'd give him some money, and then he laughed again, and then I—I got scared because the other girls had all run away, and I ran away, too."

Her father had listened with strange intentness. His playfulness was extinguished, and his face looked all at once careworn and troubled.

"You're a silly little lass," he said, after a moment's silence, "and you must not talk to strange men who ask questions. They might carry you off, you know."

He held the child silently a little while longer, and then carried her back to her bed; after which he returned to his seat near the fire. His wife had already seated herself in her low chair, her face bent above the knitting in her hands. Outside the wind howled and roared, but in the room where these two sat all was, to the eye, calm, and sweet, and cosey. The fire glowed, and emitted cheerful little snaps and sparks, the clock ticked, and the knitting-needles clicked, and through the open door the child's soft, regular breathing was distinctly audible. Suddenly the woman stirred and looked up, to find her husband's eyes fixed upon her. Strangely enough they faltered, and turned away, but presently came back to hers again.

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"You are very silent to-night, lassie," he said, putting out his hand to stroke her fair girlish head. "Are you ill, or over-tired?"

She shook her head, and dropping the knitting from her hands, clasped them over her husband's knee, and laid her cheek upon them.

"No," she said, softly, "not ill, nor tired. Only somehow I have been thinking all day of old times and—*of him!*"

She dropped her voice to a whisper as she spoke the last words, and her husband felt the hands on his knee tremble. He said nothing, though his face grew dark, and his teeth shut over his lip tightly. "I have been wondering," she went on, "what became of him, Jamie!—if he is still alive, and—" with a break in the soft voice—"if he has forgiven me *my* part in his suffering. Oh, Jamie!" she broke out passionately, throwing her arms about her husband, and raising her lovely, tearful face to his, "Oh, Jamie! I was so young and foolish when I promised to be his wife, and I had not even seen you then! Tell me, Jamie, was I so very, very wicked that I loved you best? Could I help it, Jamie?" She rose and threw herself upon his breast, sobbing like a child. She could not, through her tears, see the working of his face, nor the effort it caused him to speak. He tried to quiet her with caresses and all manner of fond epithets, and at last she lay still, with closed eyes, upon his shoulder.

A tremendous blast swept through the valley,

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shaking the cottage to its foundation, and shrieking down the chimney like a cry of despair.

"Great heavens!" Dixon muttered; "what a night!" Then, rousing himself, he added, "Come, lassie. Come rest, and promise me not to give way to such excitement again. You are not strong, and such moods are dangerous for you."

They rose, and stood facing each other before the dying fire.

"One thing," he said, seizing her hands, with a swift change of manner—"one thing, Barbara. Have you ever been sorry that you came with me—that you trusted me?"

She looked at him wonderingly, but with perfect love and trustfulness.

"Never, Jamie!" she said. "Never for one moment."

"And whatever happens," he went on, drawing her closer, "whatever happens, you are sure you never *will* be sorry?"

"Quite sure, Jamie!"

He kissed her again and again, until she laughed at his lover-like vehemence.

"Any one would suppose we were about to be separated for years," she said, playfully.

He laughed, too, but his face and voice were serious, as he said, firmly:

"Nothing shall separate us but death, lassie!"

* * * When Dixon left his house the next morning it was still intensely cold, but the wind

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had gone down, and the clumps of evergreens and shrubbery on the lawn were motionless as if painted there.

He stood a moment on the lower step drawing on his fur mittens, and, nodding at the child-face smiling at him from the window, then started to go. But at the first step his foot struck against some object which gave out a metallic sound, and stooping quickly, he raised from the snow a small pistol. One glance showed him that it was in perfect order, and every barrel loaded.

He remained for some time turning this object over and over in his hand, his nether lip drawn between his teeth. At last he glanced toward the window. The child was no longer there, but he saw now, what had before escaped his notice, that the snow beneath the window was broken and trodden by a man's footprints. With a smothered exclamation Dixon bent an instant above these tracks, and then began tracing them carefully. He found where they led from the group of pines to the window; he found where they had first approached the house across the open fields from the hill beyond, direct and even, as of one with a fixed purpose; he found also where they had turned from the window in long, regular strides as of one in flight. These he followed to the foot of the hill, and across to the other side, where they seemed to lose themselves in the trackless forest. He stood here again for some moments, an ashy ring forming itself about his lips. Then, with a deep breath,

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he set his teeth together, thrust the pistol into his pocket, and turned toward the town. It was scarcely awake as yet. Smoke curled lazily upward from the chimneys, but hardly any one was stirring. Even about the door of that great commercial emporium known far and near as "Buckey's," the regular loafers had as yet no representative; and here, as elsewhere, the snow, which had drifted across the steps, was undisturbed.

A little beyond "Buckey's" stood a neat frame structure, across whose entrance stretched a sign bearing the inscription:

"James Dixon, Justice of the Peace."

This building Dixon entered. A boy who was steaming himself at the great stove in the centre of the room looked up with a duck of the head as the proprietor of the office entered, paying no further attention as he proceeded to divest himself of his outer garments and seat himself at his desk.

Apparently business at this time of the year was not pressing, for, beyond arranging some papers with legal headings, and glancing over a newspaper or two, Dixon did no work. The most of the time he sat industriously smoking, his eyes set upon the uncheerful winter landscape without. Once, when the boy was absent he took from his breast-pocket the pistol, and examined it again with a knitted brow; after which he locked it in a drawer of the desk, and resumed his pipe.

At noon he sent the boy away, and, locking the office-door, turned his face homeward. The town

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was awake now, or as much so as it was likely to be. A few sleighs and sleds were standing before the doors of the saloons, and it appeared to Dixon that an unwonted excitement prevailed in and about "Buckey's," all the men visible being gathered before the familiar red door, and all talking at once in even louder tones than usual.

As Dixon came nearer, two of the men started forward and approached him.

"We was jest a-comin' fur ye, Square," said the foremost. "Thar's a stranger in thar as won't give no account of himself, an' we was thinkin'——"

"Oh, quit foolin'," said the other, roughly. "It's nothing but a dead tramp. That's all, Square," and he shifted his quid to the other side of his mouth, composedly.

Dixon changed countenance. A little tremor ran through his frame.

"A tramp?" he repeated. "Dead?"

"Dead as a door-nail!" the man answered. "Froze brittle. Small an' his boy found him this mornin' in Crosse's timber."

They started on, giving Dixon precedence. It appeared to the men that he showed very small interest, and unaccountable deliberation. Even when they had reached Buckey's, he mounted the steps slowly, standing an instant with his hands on the latch, as if indifferent, or reluctant. At last, with another impatient movement of the shoulders, he opened the door and went in. The crowd

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of rough, bearded men who filled the space between the counters and the stove, nodded respectfully and fell back.

That which they had surrounded lay stretched stark and stiff upon the bare floor. It was the body of a man which had been at some time sturdy and strong. Now it was pinched and wasted, and clad in thin, worn garments, and shoes that seemed ready to drop from the naked, frost-bitten feet. The unkempt iron-gray hair and beard gave the face, at first glance, a look of wildness, but, observing more closely, one saw that the features, though heavy, were not uncomely, and wore a look of extreme suffering, which even death had not been able to efface.

"Looks like a Inglishman, eh, Square?" said one of the men present.

Dixon did not seem to have heard him. He stood looking down upon the dead man without moving or speaking. The ashy ring had again shown itself about his lips, and was creeping slowly over his face.

"It's the first as I've seen in these parts for many a year," said another. "Our county ain't pop'lar with that kind," he added, grimly.

"He took a mighty oncomfortable time o' year fur trampin'," said a blear-eyed vagabond near the stove. "I've ben meditatin' somethin' o' the kind myself, but reckon I'll wait fur warm weather. My constitution is delikit."

"*Don't* wait for warm her, Shanks," said

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Buckey himself, leaning comfortably across the counter. "They'll make it warm enough for *you*, whenever ye go!"

At the laugh which followed this sally, Dixon started and looked around him, in a dazed sort of way. The laugh died out suddenly, and the men sank into a shame-faced silence, but even now he did not speak.

"They's somethin' in his breast pocket, Square," said one of them, bending over the body. "Somethin' like a book, or a——"

"Take it out, Slater," said Dixon, in a voice at which all present started, and looked at him curiously.

The man did as ordered, producing from the tattered pocket a small, soiled blank-book, whose pages appeared to be closely written. He handed it to Dixon, who took it mechanically, and, opening it, appeared to glance at the contents at random.

Those nearest him saw his fingers close suddenly upon the book, and heard the sharp indrawn breath which he shut back between his teeth. He put his hand to his head again, and held it there while his eyes swept over the group of respectful but inquisitive faces.

"There is something here," he said, holding the book before him, and speaking in the voice which had once before made them start—"there is something here I would like to look into. Let the —the body lie here until I come back."

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There was a murmur of assent, and he turned and left the store. They saw him stand a moment on the step outside, his face toward home. Then he turned in the opposite direction and disappeared.

Dixon entered his office, locked the door, and flung himself into his chair, the little book open before him. The ashen ring had widened until his whole face was like that of the dead. Not a muscle of his rigid face stirred as with desperate eyes he read on and on. Only the faint rustle of the leaves as he turned the pages, and his heavy breathing broke the silence. And this is what he read:

THE DEAD MAN'S STORY.

W——, 187-.

My wanderings are almost over. Exposure and misery have nearly finished their work. I feel my strength ebbing from day to day, and I know that I must soon die, and die, it may be, with the purpose which has sustained me all these years unattained. Knowing this, I have determined to write in this book the story of my life, hoping that when I am dead—"found dead," it may be, like a tramp or vagabond—some pitying eye may fall upon these words and give me decent burial, for something in me rebels at being thrown like a dog into an outcast's grave. Here is the story as I have repeated it over and over to myself hundreds of times during the weary years that have passed:

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I was accounted a quiet, good-natured fellow in the little town in England where I was born and lived before I came to this country. I was slow of speech, but I had received a fair education, and had a turn for reading, and for scribbling down my thoughts. I was a printer by trade, like my father before me. He died when I was a lad of sixteen, leaving me to care for the mother, and for Barbara. She was the daughter of our nearest neighbor, and from the time she could walk we were always together. When she was still very young her parents died, and their children were scattered, and Barbara came to us. I was the only child left of many, and my mother gladly welcomed her as a daughter. We lived together for years as brother and sister, but I was not long in finding out that my love for Barbara passed that of any brother, and when she was fifteen we became engaged.

From that day I had but one ambition in life—to put myself into circumstances where I could make her my wife, for I had vowed in my heart not to do so until I could offer her something more than the hard lot of a common mechanic's wife. It seemed to me she was born for something better. She was a real English beauty, with chestnut hair falling far below her waist, and a skin like milk and roses. A gay, bright creature she was, fond of music and dancing and company; fond of me too, as I believe still, though I *was* slow and silent and awkward: trusting in me, leaning upon

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me, and confiding in me every thought of her innocent heart.

I did not care for gay scenes myself, but I often went with Barbara to such entertainments as the place afforded, and enjoyed seeing her happy, and admired, and courted.

When Barbara was about eighteen years old a young man came to our place. I will not write his name here—there is no need. He was London-born and bred, and, though a printer like myself, far cleverer, and full of ambitious schemes of which I never dreamed. He was a handsome, dashing fellow, with finer ways than we were used to. He could do a little of everything, and very well too. He sang, and played the guitar, and danced like a Frenchman, and in no time had won his way with every one. The women folks, of course, were carried away with him.

The first time he saw Barbara was at a dance where I had taken her. He pointed her out to me, and asked her name. I may have betrayed something of my love and pride as I answered, for he gave me a quick, curious look, and a moment later asked for an introduction to her. After that they danced together a good deal, and every one was saying what a handsome couple they made.

Soon after this the mother became ailing and fretted at being left alone of evenings, so I often stayed with her while Barbara danced at some neighbor's house or public assembly with the newcomer.

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I never had a thought of jealousy, not even when the fellows in the shop began chaffing me for letting my sweetheart run about with another man, for I trusted Barbara, and was not he my friend? Unlike as we were, had he not singled me out from all the others, and made me his confidant and companion on all occasions?

Even after I had left the shop, having at last secured the position as book-keeper at the —— Mills which I had for years been working for, he kept up the former intimacy, and often I found him waiting for me when I returned late from my work, and I liked nothing so well as to sit and smoke, and listen to him and Barbara, their singing, and laughter, and foolish talk.

It went on so for a good while. I was beginning to lay by money, and the time for our marriage was not far off. But a strike broke out just the among the spinners. I had known it was coming, and done what I could to prevent it, knowing what the result would be, but it was all in vain. Their wrongs were too real and of too long standing. The crisis came; the mills were closed; for a few days the strikers believed they would win the day.

At the end of a week the mills opened with a new set of operatives hired from a neighboring town. Riots and bloodshed followed. Those were troublous times. I could not keep my hand from giving aid to the suffering wives and children of men I had lived among all my life. I took no thought for consequences. One day I received my

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discharge. I was dazed by the cruel blow; I went about like a man walking in his sleep.

One night as I walked the streets, some one I met told me that my friend, the man I am writing of, was ill. I went at once to his room, which was in the building over the printing office where he had now gotten to be foreman. I found him restless and feverish, and at his request I stayed with him until the small hours of the night. Then I went home. No one saw me going in or out of his room, but I met two or three stragglers on my way home. I had been half an hour in bed when an alarm of fire was sounded, and I rose and joined the crowd in the streets. The —— Mills were burning, and in a short time were burned to the ground. The same day I was arrested on a charge of having set the fire. I laughed at the charge. My friend, who was now delirious with fever, would soon put me right. My trial was deferred until he was able to appear. When the day came at last, he stood up, white and haggard, in that crowded court-room, and swore he had not seen me at all on the night I had spent with him—the night of the fire. There were other things against me: my known friendship for the leaders of the strike, my discharge, my absence from home at the time the fire must have been started, and other small but damning evidence. I was convicted, and sentenced to transportation. I saw my old mother fall as if dead! I saw Barbara's white face bending over her; plainer than all, I saw that man who had

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been my friend, and the look he gave the woman who was to have been my wife! Something leaped into life within me then—something which has never died. If I could have reached him then and there!

I do not suppose twenty people in the town believed me guilty. I do not believe the jury which convicted me, nor the judge who sentenced me, believed me guilty; but everything was against me, except my past life, and that had no weight with the law. My sentence was commuted to a term of years in the penitentiary. I will not write of my prison-life. Three months after it began I received a letter from Barbara, telling me of my mother's death, bidding me keep up courage, and pray, but saying nothing of herself, or of *him*.

At the end of five years came freedom. The real criminals had been discovered, and I was discharged. The man who went out of that prison door was not the man who had entered it. The law, conscious of the fact that no human power can make amends to an innocent man for a punishment unjustly inflicted, takes no notice of it. It is dumb before a wrong so monstrous. I went back to my native town. Every hand was stretched out to me. My old employers at the mill would have put me in my old place, but I refused. I inquired for Barbara and for him. They had married after my mother's death and gone, it was said, to America. I took measures to prove this; then I went to work at my old trade. I worked day and night, and

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lived on next to nothing. At the end of a year I had what I wanted. A fortnight later I was in New York.

My plan was to work my way over the country —to work and watch. I felt sure that the man I was looking for would work at his trade, too, and I believed in time I should get on his track. I stayed several months in New York, and found plenty to do. The only fault found with me was my love of change. "You know what is said of 'rolling stones,' Jordan," my employers would say, as I was about to leave. "It isn't moss-gathering I am after," I would answer.

I took no man into my confidence, but I lost no chance of getting acquainted with men of our craft. I frequented places where they congregated, set them to talking, asking them as to Englishmen they had known, etc.

"You are looking for some one, Jordan," was said more than once.

"Maybe I am," I would answer.

Once a man who had been looking on and listening, said, with a laugh, "I'm devilish glad it ain't me you're looking for, Jordan!" And I knew well enough what he meant.

I have wandered south and west, I have thought many a time I was on the right trail, but it has come to naught so far. About a year ago I fell ill, and was a long time in a hospital. When I was discharged I was a mere wreck. Something was the matter with my heart, they said. I have not

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been able to work long at a time since. Such work as I get is given me out of compassion.

At thirty-five I have the face and gait of a feeble man of sixty. When I catch a glimpse of my reflection, I am like a stranger in my own eyes, yet feeble as is my body, the *motive* for which I live is strong within me.

By every glimpse into a warm, cosey fireside where the happy husband and wife and children gather, I renew my vow to find the man who wrecked my life, to meet him face to face, to unmask his villainy, to let him see Barbara, his wife, turn from him in horror and loathing, to have his craven life at last! This desire, continually thwarted, never extinguished, upholds me. It is meat, and drink, and clothing to my famished, shivering body. I must be the chosen instrument of God's vengeance, or I should have died of sheer despair before now. Die? No, not yet. I must press on. Who knows but I may be even now near the goal?

March, 187–.

I am stranded here in a little western town where a false trail has led me. I am growing weaker. A slow fever is burning out my life. The last three months have been terrible. I have had but little work, and I have suffered—oh my God, how I have suffered—from cold and hunger.

My appearance is such that I am taken for a tramp. I have barely escaped arrest several times

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as a suspicious character. It is hard for me to see little children run away at my approach, and women turn pale and tremble as they open the door to me. So far I have only asked for work, though I have often slept supperless in sheds and barns. I have found a little work at my old trade. When it is done I shall push on. What with this fever in my blood, and the deadly longing in my heart, I have no rest.

December, 187–.

I have found a new trail—the clearest I have come across. Chance threw into my hand a newspaper in which the name of him I am seeking is mentioned, *honorably* mentioned, in connection with the politics of a certain State. It may not be he. Another man may bear the same name, but new life has entered my veins since I saw it. Last night I dreamed I had my hand on his throat.

December, 187–.

I have found him! From this hill-top where I am sitting I see the town where he lives in comfort and honor—the very house that shelters him. The smoke of his fire comes up to me. It is a bitter cold day, and I have eaten nothing, but I feel neither cold nor hunger. From the day when I started on this last sure trail everything has been against me. I have been sick; I have found no work; I have begged my bread; I have been hunted for the crimes of others; I have borne

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abuse, scorn, insult. The very lowest depth of misery and humiliation has been reached. But that is all nothing: my purpose is to be accomplished. The end is near.

I reached this spot to-day at noon, and sat down here to rest a bit before going down into the town to make assurance sure. Soon after, a party of children came up the hill with their sleds. When they saw me they ran, except one little lass of seven or eight. She stood still and looked at me, as if too scared to move. I know I am terrible to look at—I have seen my face in pools of water as I drank—but I would not fright the child, and I tried to make my voice gentle as I said:

"Don't be scared, little one; I won't hurt you."

Just then the sun came out of a cloud and struck across her face and hair. I cried out, I could not help it. It was Barbara's face and hair, but the eyes were *his*.

"Stop!" I said, as the child started off. "What is your name?"

"Barbara," she answered, and then: "If you are hungry," she said, "mamma will give you something to eat. We live down yonder in the brown cottage."

I stared at her, shutting my teeth together.

"Maybe papa would give you some money," she said again. "He is such a good man, my papa is."

I burst into a laugh. The little lass's fear came back, and she turned and ran away.

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I have not moved from the spot since she left me. I have carefully cleaned and loaded the weapon I have carried so long—the instrument in my hand of God's vengeance. Before another sun rises it will be over.

I sit and look at the cottage the child pointed out. I can see that it is neat and comfortable. The sun is going down, and the windows on this side are red as blood. So is all the snow between this place and that. I shall wait until night. I feel no fear, no remorse; and yet, if the child had not had *his* eyes——

Meanwhile the men who were waiting for Dixon's return became a little restive, as the minutes dragged along and he did not appear. Even those ready means of beguiling time common to men of their stamp—the telling of highly-seasoned and *apropos* stories interspersed with frequent libations, began to pall. Some of them stole away to their neglected dinners, returning shortly with a renewed sense of wonder as they still found him absent.

And the stark figure lay there in their midst, itself for the time forgotten in the stories and conjectures its presence had evoked, the faint smile frozen on its unshaven lips, the half-open eyes fixed seemingly upon the door with a terrible intentness.

At last one of the men who was near a window overlooking the street, said:

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"He's comin'!" and a moment or two later, "I swear, he's paler'n the dead man his self!"

"Mebbe it's his long-lost brother!" suggested the vagabond Shanks, who was given to pleasantries of this sort.

"He was always that a-way!" declared another. "They's men as can't look at a corpse without turnin' white around the gills, an' Dixon's one on 'em! I've seen him a-fore. An' he ain't no coward, neither!"

"No! *He* ain't no coward!" chorused the others, and a moment or two later Dixon pushed open the door and came in. Every man's eye was drawn to his face, but he saw no one. He looked straight before him into space.

"Buckey," he said, addressing that worthy in one of his many capacities, that of undertaker, "I knew this—man. Make arrangements to have the—the body brought to my house, at once, and to have the funeral from there to-morrow morning."

He paused a moment, a kind of click in his throat, and then added, "Let every man and woman who knows me be present."

He turned and went out, and they saw him, with his head sunk on his breast, walking homeward.

At the appointed hour the small front room of Dixon's cottage was filled with men and women, drawn thither in part through deference to his expressed desire, in part through curiosity excited by the rumors which had filled the air since the day before.

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The body of the stranger, now shrouded and coffined, rested upon a bier in the centre of the room. At its head sat the minister of the one church of which the town could boast.

The people were very silent, even more so than the occasion seemed to warrant, but they studied each other's faces furtively, as if each sought in the other some clue to the mystery which was to himself impenetrable.

They were plain, hard-working people, and, for the most part, decent, law-abiding citizens. The man in whose house they were assembled had been with them for years. What he had been before he came among them they had never asked. It may be that some of them had something in their own past they would fain have forgotten. He had won their respect and confidence, and in time their affection, for, as has been said, he was generous, brave and helpful. He had been their chosen leader. They had honored him with such small honors as they had to bestow, and as his reputation as a political writer and speaker spread, other and higher honors were more than hinted at.

To-day they were disturbed and restless, as if under the shadow of some impending change or calamity. They waited in a tense, constrained silence for what might happen. At length a door opened noiselessly and Dixon stood before them. A thrill ran through every breast as they saw him. A score of years might have passed over him, and not have wrought the change of this one night.

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The assured carriage, the look of strength and power and pride had vanished. The broad shoulders stooped. The hair was matted over his brow, the features pinched and livid.

He let his eyes wander over the faces of those present a moment; then, in a strained, husky voice, began speaking.

"You who have been my friends," he said, "who for years have given me your respect and confidence and support, look at the man lying there in his coffin! *That is my work!*"

He paused. Every face blanched perceptibly. No one moved, but all hung, with parted lips, upon the next words that strange, toneless voice might utter. It began again:

"That man was my friend, and I was his; but he possessed one thing I wanted—the love of a woman, his betrothed wife. Up to the time I began to covet this woman's love, I was as truly his friend as he was mine. Up to the hour when the devil put it into my power to swear away his good name I had never dreamed of being false to him, though I had reason to believe that the woman I loved cared for him only as a sister might, and I might have fairly won her. He was accused of a crime, and my word might have cleared him. Instead of that, it convicted him. On my false testimony he went, an innocent man, to prison, and I came with the woman I had perjured my soul to win as my wife to this country.

"For years I tried to forget. I could not. My

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sin followed me day and night, and poisoned every moment of my existence. At last I made up my mind to go back to the old place and give myself up, and make amends for what I had done. I left my wife and child here, and worked my passage back to England. I was too late. Justice had been done so far as human law could do it. The real criminals had been found, and he I had wronged was free. And he had gone to America. I knew what for. He was slow to anger, but, when once aroused, his anger was terrible. I knew that he was seeking me, and I knew that he would find me. From that time I never lay down to sleep but my last thought was, 'It may be to-morrow!' I never rose in the morning that I did not say to myself, 'Perhaps it may be to-day!' For years I have lived with this spectre of vengeance at my elbow. What my life has been since I came among you, you think you know. What it really has been, no mortal man can guess. At last, what was to be came to pass. He found me."

A shudder shook the speaker, and he was silent an instant. Then he continued:

"He found me. I have read in his own handwriting *how* he found me, and all the history of his ruined life. He has stood at my window with my life in his hands, and at the last moment—God alone knows why, perhaps for the sake of the woman he loved and her child—he has spared my life. I have seen the print of his feet where he must have stood outside in the bitter cold looking

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in upon my warmth and comfort. I have found the very weapon with which he would have taken my life lying at my door where he must have flung it, and I have traced his steps where he must have fled across the field to hide himself in the darkness, only to die almost within a stone's-throw of this house. He had sworn to meet me face to face, and it was to be—like this! The hand of God was in it. I might have kept silent. The secret was in my hands alone. No human law could reach me now that his tongue is silent; but lying there, as he lay yesterday, dead, in rags, he has spoken as no living man could speak! He has accused and convicted and sentenced me, as no human law could have done!"

He ceased as abruptly as he had begun. He stood there, broken, self-accused, in a humiliation so deep, a despair so utter, that the sternest of his listeners was moved to a compassion which fought desperately with the horror his story had inspired. Involuntarily, unconsciously, those nearest him had shrunk away until he stood apart, alone, at the foot of the coffin, from which the dead, half-opened eyes seem to hold him in a stony, unrelenting stare.

For a time there was a complete, terrible silence. Then the minister, who had sat all this time at the head of the coffin, his venerable head bowed upon his hands, rose, and went across the room, his mild face illumined with a look of divine pity. He laid his withered hands upon Dixon's folded arms, and spoke:

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"'When I kept silence my bones waxed old. Day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me.

"'Mine iniquities are gone over my head, as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me. I am troubled. I am bowed down greatly. My sorrow is continually before me. I will declare my iniquity. I will be sorry for my sin. Forsake me not, O Lord! Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation!'"

All heads were bowed. From the corner where the women sat together came the sound of suppressed sobbing.

The minister went back to his place, and folding his hands above the coffin, said:

"Let us pray."

When the prayer was ended, the coffin was closed, and, followed by the entire assemblage, was borne to the place prepared for it.

The day was mild. A dense, soft snow was falling, through which the figures of men and women moved with phantasmal noiselessness. Dixon walked foremost by the side of the clergyman. When all was over, he raised his eyes from the icy clods of the new-made grave. The venerable man stood silent at its foot. Otherwise he was alone.

At the door of his cottage, the old man, too, left him, with a strong, long hand-pressure. He stood for some time before the door. The air was thick with the great flakes of snow, the footprints beneath the window and across the frozen field were

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already hidden from sight, but he knew that they were there, and always would be.

At last, very slowly and heavily, he turned and went into the house. It was cold and silent. The door of the front room stood open, and the chairs were as the people had left them. He went into the room and tried to restore things to their customary appearance. With a visible shudder he crossed the middle of the room where the coffin had stood, and threw open the windows. Then he went out, closing the door carefully. In the passage he listened a moment, but it was still silent. He knew that the child had been sent to a neighbor's, and that he should find his wife in her own room.

He found her sitting by the window. She did not move as he entered, and he stood near her for some moments waiting vainly for some sign that she was aware of his presence. Then he spoke her name.

She turned slightly toward him. That was all.

Dixon threw himself upon a chair near her, with a groan.

"Barbara!" he cried, in a voice of anguish, "Barbara! Is this all you have to give me?"

She turned toward him a wan, drawn face with dazed, tearless eyes that seemed to look at him as from afar off.

"I trusted you so completely," she said, her words falling as slowly and coldly as the snowflakes outside. "so completely! I never knew

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that such things *could* be! I shall never forgive myself that I believed him guilty, never! I shall never forgive myself that I helped to drive him to despair. I shall never forgive——"

"Don't say it, Barbara! For *God's* sake, don't say it!" her husband cried, throwing himself at her feet, and burying his face upon her lap. He felt her whole body recoil from his touch, and shrank back, hiding his face upon his arms.

"I was such a child," she went on, "such a foolish, weak child—but I might have known better. I shall never forgive myself!"

Dixon groaned aloud. "But I am ready, quite ready," she continued in the same voice.

"Ready?"

He started up, and stared at her wildly. He feared for her reason.

"Yes," she said, "ready to go with you, away from here, anywhere, at any time. You cannot stay here?"

There was something in her voice and face impossible to describe—a deadly apathy, an icy coldness, a stony acceptance of a hopeless situation.

For the first time in twenty-four hours the color returned to Dixon's face. His eyes flashed, his teeth were set, as he sprang to his feet. In that instant he set his face against the power that would fling him into bottomless abysses of shame and ruin.

"I *will* stay here!" he said, fiercely. "I will *not* fly again! The worst that could happen *has*

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happened. Where should I go to escape my fate? Why should I attempt it? No! I swear to live my life here, and to live it as a man should live with God's help, and *yours*, Barbara!" he implored. "Will you drive me to despair? Will you forsake me, or will you help me?"

A shiver shook the woman's slight form, and she passed her hand across her eyes once or twice, before reaching it toward him. A piteous smile quivered across her lips, but her eyes did not seek his.

He seized her hand, and again threw himself before her.

"I am your wife, Jamie," she said, gently. "Your wife, for better or for worse. Whatever I can do to help you, I will do."

Then at last the eyes of the two met in a long, long gaze, and in that moment Dixon read his fate.

Everything else might, and did, come back to him—the esteem and confidence of his fellow-men, worldly success, aye, and the blessing of God upon the work to which he dedicated the best portion of his remaining years—the raising up of the fallen and unfortunate; all these things came to him in time, but one thing he forever missed—the old look of perfect, unquestioning trust in one woman's eyes, the eyes of the woman for whose sake he had sinned.

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